

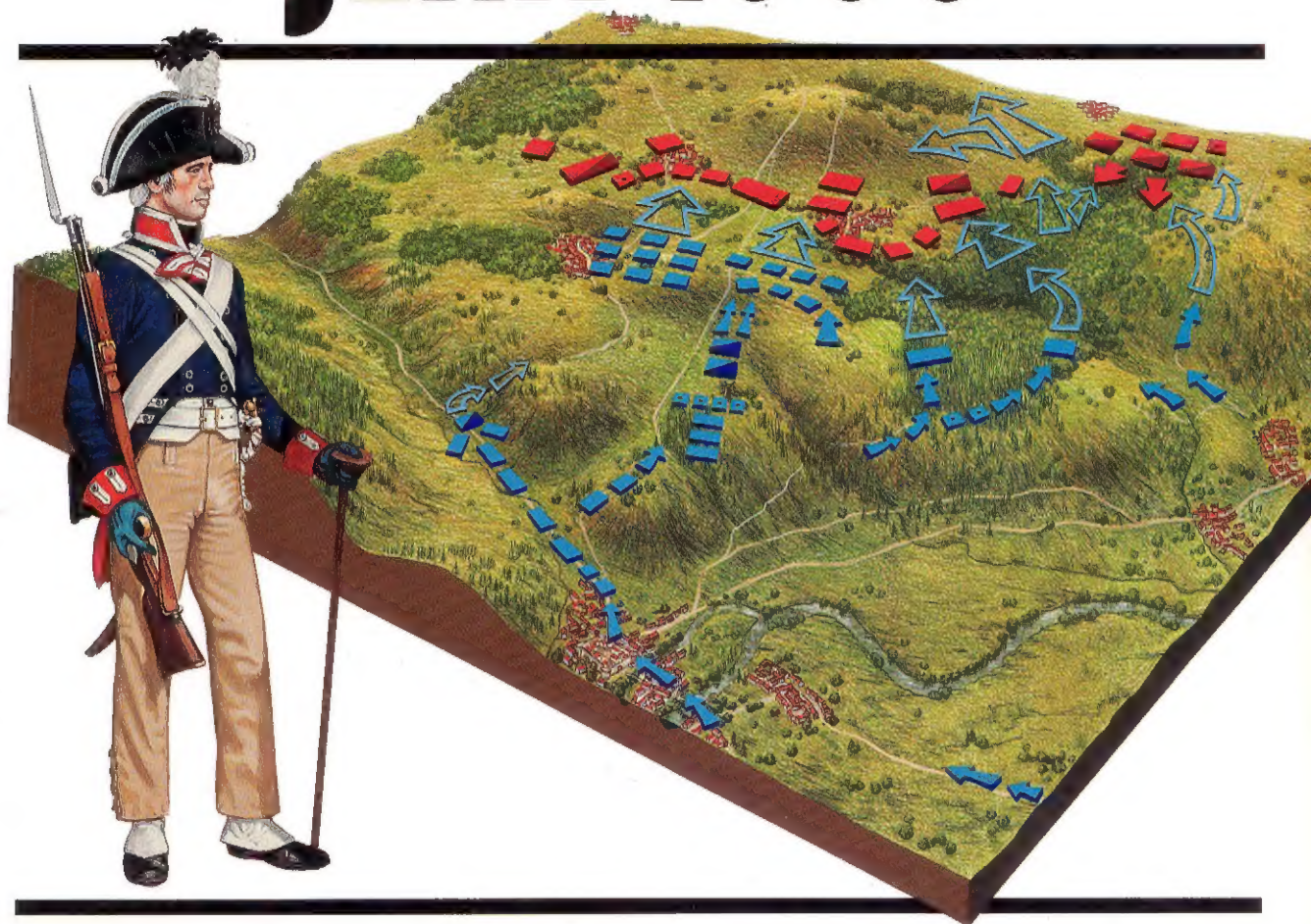
BY DAVID G. CHANDLER

OSPREY  
MILITARY

CAMPAIGN SERIES

20

# JENA 1806



## NAPOLEON DESTROYS PRUSSIA

DAVID G. CHANDLER





GENERAL EDITOR DAVID G. CHANDLER

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◀ *Napoleon at Jena, by Vernet. The Emperor allowed his soldiers – particularly those of the Imperial Guard – considerable latitude. In this famous scene, Napoleon (accompanied by Prince Murat) is hailed by a Grenadier eager to see the Guard sent into action. He was soon put in his place. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)*

Dedicated to the officers of the sometime 6th Armoured Division, BAOR, who, ably led by Major J. P. Riley, then of the Queen's Regiment, accompanied the author over the (to him) hitherto terra incognita of the actual battlefields in 1991.



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#### Key to Map Symbols

Army Group



Army



Corps



Division



Brigade



Regiment



Battalion



Infantry



Cavalry



Artillery



The author acknowledges his debt to his friend, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Wells, USAF, who (with his family) conducted two invaluable preliminary reconnaissances of the battlefield; and for help and advice to Philip Haythornthwaite, Peter Hofschröder, Lieutenant Commander George Nafziger, USNR, Daniel I. Radakovich, and Michael Preston of the Anne S. K. Brown Library.

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▲ *The plateau on the first summit of the Landgrafenberg, looking north: the peak is on the horizon. The picture was taken from near the approximate location of Napoleon's encampment over the night 13/14 October. Until 1991 the area served as a Soviet Army Transport Driving School. (Author's photograph)*

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# DESCENT TO WAR – 1806

As he had shown at Austerlitz on 2 December of the previous year, Napoleon's belief in the all-importance of the 'big battle' was fundamental to his concept of waging war. He saw 'only one thing, namely the enemy's main body' and set out ruthlessly to 'crush it, confident that secondary matters will then settle themselves'. He also aimed to achieve the decisive blow at the earliest possible moment in a campaign. Swift, short and decisive were three basic principles in his concept of what a later age would term '*blitzkrieg*' warfare.

No better example of Napoleon applying these principles can be found than the campaign he

waged in central Europe against Prussia in late 1806. The military events that took place during the 33 days of active campaigning from 8 October to 10 November that year constitute a military masterpiece of the first order, which added yet more lustre to Napoleon's reputation. Yet, paradoxically, in some ways the achievements of 1806 were to prove politically disappointing and incomplete.

Examined from one point of view, the War of the Fourth Coalition (as the impending struggle of 1806-7 would be named) developed directly from its predecessor. In December 1805, Austria had made peace with Napoleon; not so Russia. Preliminaries were eventually agreed, but Napoleon ignored the warnings of his Foreign Minister, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, that Russia was potentially France's greatest rival on the European continent, and it came as a rude shock when, in late August 1806, the court of St. Petersburg finally refused to ratify the treaty. Secondly there was – as always – England to consider. French hopes that the new 'Ministry of All the Talents' led by Lord William Grenville and Charles James Fox might lead to peace were soon dashed, although lingering traces of them were to persist to at least mid-year. But British political, moral and financial support played no small part in the eventual formation of the Fourth Coalition by Prussia, Russia and England, together with Sweden and Portugal, on 6 October – and in its preservation until July 1807.

Then there was Prussia itself. During the last critical months of 1805 there had been a real possibility that King Frederick-William III would add his 225,000 troops to those of the Third Coalition. In fact, despite strong Russian blandishments, that monarch had sat on the fence, although the ruthless passage of Bernadotte's I Corps through the Prussian territory of Ansbach



▲ The Emperor Napoleon, by Lefevre. In 1806 Napoleon (1769-1821) was already acknowledged as the greatest general of his time – a reputation he had earned once and for all the

previous 2 December by winning the famous Battle of Austerlitz on the first anniversary of his crowning as Emperor of France. (Author's Collection)

## Europe in 1806



en route for the Danube had led to strong protests from Berlin. But Napoleon was not fooled by the Hohenzollern monarch – whom he knew hankered after possession of French-occupied Hanover (originally seized by General Adolphe Edouard Mortier in June 1803) – and when the Prussian Foreign Minister Christian Haugwitz presented his master's heartfelt congratulations at Vienna after Austerlitz, the Emperor had brusquely remarked that the good wishes had 'all too clearly been recently readdressed'.

With typical lack of scruple Napoleon proceeded to wring every possible advantage from the situation. Prussia appeared to be at his mercy. Napoleon required, and obtained, a formal alliance against Great Britain. He demanded, and took possession of, the choice Prussian principalities of Cleves, Ansbach and Neuchâtel. In return for these considerable cessions Prussia was to receive Hanover. The Convention of Schönbrunn was initialled on 15 December 1805, but not ratified – as Prussia tried vainly to wriggle out of the snare





▲ **Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord**, after Scheffer. The ablest French diplomat of the Napoleonic period, Talleyrand (1754–1838), sometime Bishop of Autun, was a natural survivor who served successive regimes in high office for more than 40 years. He was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs by the French

Directory in 1795, and in 1804 Napoleon appointed him Grand Chamberlain of the Empire. Before 1806 was out, he would have been granted the title of Duke of Benavente. A supreme realist, he consistently regarded Russia as the main threat to the French Empire. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)



▲ **Frederick-William III, King of Prussia**, by Johnson. Born at Potsdam, Frederick-William (1770–1840) was the grandson of Frederick the Great, but inherited none of his military gifts. Succeeding to the throne in 1797, he attempted a number of reforms, in particular encouraging religious toleration and reconstructing the finances of his country. He

had almost joined the Tsar and the Emperor of Austria in 1805, but stepped back just in time after Austerlitz. Napoleon regarded him as being weak, evincing scant respect for him either as man or monarch. But despite the disasters of 1806 and 1807 he would see his great adversary's final cataclysm in 1815. He lived until 1840. (Philip J. Haythornwaite Collection)

– until 24 February. At a stroke Napoleon had not only forced one power to sign an infamous agreement but also increased the isolation of another – Great Britain.

The Emperor next turned his attention to the re-ordering of Germany. With Austria prostrate, Russia at a safe distance and Prussia diplomatically humiliated, he decreed the creation of the French-orientated Confederation of the Rhine on 12 July, and on 6 August announced the irrevocable dissolution of the anachronistic Holy Roman Empire. Meanwhile his stepson, Eugène de Beauharnais, was married to a Bavarian princess;

Joseph Bonaparte had already been sent with Marshal André Massena to conquer Naples and become its ruler; Louis Bonaparte had been made King of Holland; and General Auguste Viesse de Marmont had been sent to occupy Ragusa in distant Dalmatia to check Russian pretensions in the Adriatic region. There seemed to be no limits to Napoleon's ambitions. For, as Minister Count Molé was to remark in a later year, 'Although Napoleon's common sense amounted to genius, he never could see where the possible left off.' Nor was he the most tactful of men.

It was this last weakness that led Napoleon to



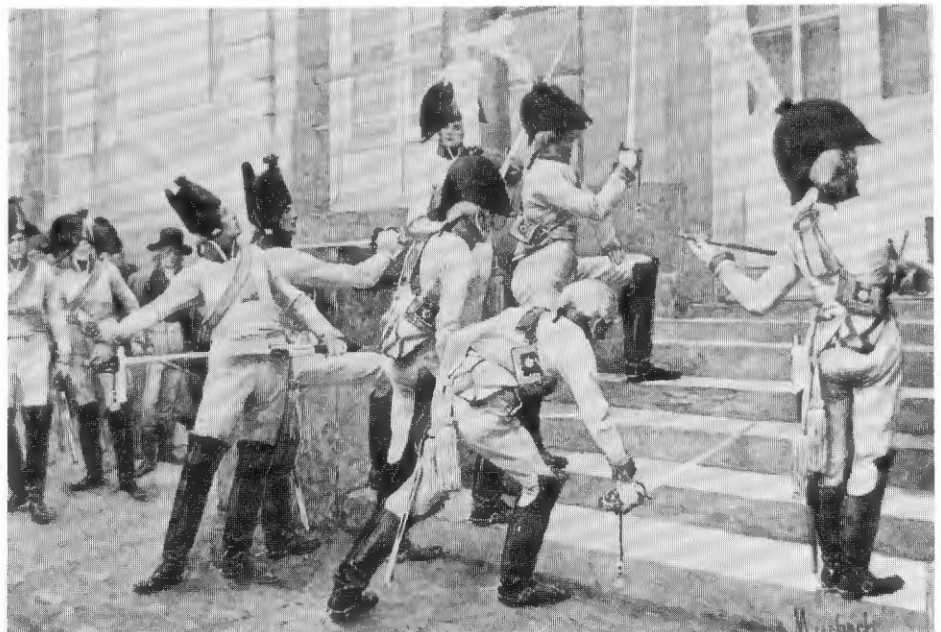
overplay his hand in 1806. It is doubtful, all things considered, that Napoleon set out deliberately to provoke war with Prussia. For one thing he still held a lurking respect for the army created by Frederick the Great; for another he evinced nothing but scorn for Frederick's grandson, and (not without some reason) probably believed him to be incapable of decisive action. So it was that in the course of protracted negotiations with the British Government, Napoleon suddenly placed Hanover on the table and, without the least consultation of Prussia, offered to return it forthwith to its erstwhile Elector, King George III, as the price for a general peace. In fact Napoleon, who had declared in 1796 that 'war, like government, is a matter of tact', could have done nothing better designed to insult Prussia. In any case the effect of the offer in London was minimal. King George was ailing, and many of his British ministers regarded the Hanoverian connection as a liability. However, the mere suggestion sounded like the thunderclap of doom in Berlin.

Not that weak-willed Frederick-William III or his Francophile minister Haugwitz together with the 'Peace Party' at Potsdam might have found it impossible to accept the new proposal, angered though they already were by Napoleon's plans for Germany. But it was wholly unacceptable to the King's beautiful and strong-minded spouse,

Queen Louise, who headed the so-called 'War Party' at court that included the Gallophobic Karl Hardenburg and two senior generals, the aged Charles William Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, and Prince Friedrich Ludwig von Hohenlohe. The arguments raged for days in secret. In the end the 'War Party' triumphed, but only, it is often claimed, after the strong-willed Queen had persistently denied conjugal rights to her uxorious husband until he declared for 'the path of honour'. On 7 August the irrevocable decision for war was at last taken in secret, and the search for allies accelerated. On the 10th, Prussian mobilization began.

For once French diplomatic intelligence did not fully penetrate the secret. Not until 5 September were 30,000 French reservists called up, and 50,000 conscripts of the Class of 1806 mobilized, as precautionary moves. Ten days later Napoleon began to take the situation seriously, on learning that Prussia had been (since the 6th) in the act of occupying Saxony to keep that state out of the Confederation of the Rhine, as well as receiving reports that Prussian bloods had been sharpening their swords ostentatiously on the steps of the French Embassy in Berlin. Prussia was – somewhat too late – formally warned not to occupy Saxony under pain of a possible French declaration of war.

► *The Prussian Gardes de Corps sharpen their swords on the steps of the French Embassy in Berlin, 1806, by Myrbach. The young bloods of the Royal Bodyguard made their country's intentions clear by this impolitic act. Before the year was out they would be humiliatingly paraded by their French captors past the same building. (Philip J. Haythornthwaite)*



# Prussian Plans, 1806





# PLANS AND PREPARATIONS

## Prussian War Plans

The weakest attribute of the Prussian Army lay at the levels of command and control. In 1806 there was not even an embryonic staff corps, only a discordant group of opinionated senior officers. There were no less than three chiefs of staff: the shadowy General Phull and Colonels Gerhard Johann von Scharnhorst and Rudolf Massenbach (nicknamed the 'evil genius of Prussia'). Personal ambitions and rivalries made differences of opinion inevitable.

The 'curse of Babel' ensued at Potsdam as, from 10 August, the Prussian leaders met in long and earnest debate to decide how best to defeat Napoleon and thus avenge their country's humiliation at his hands. *La Grande Armée de l'Allemagne* was known to be deployed over a wide area of central Germany so as to overawe Austria, tempting the Prussians to try a surprise attack to defeat it in detail before any concentration could be completed. But on no other point was the hydra-headed Prussian high command in any general agreement. Clearly no advance contingency plans existed. For a full month the complexities of military protocol were allowed to hold sway, and not until early September did anything like a Prussian order of battle begin to emerge. Eventually, three field armies were organized. The first, under Brunswick, numbered on paper 75,000 men drawn from the Berlin and Magdeburg districts. The second, commanded by Hohenlohe, initially 42,000 strong including the newly assimilated Saxon army (18,000 men), was drawn up around Dresden. The third, under Generals Rüchel and Blücher (perhaps 29,000 strong), took post near Mülhausen and Göttingen respectively. Based upon Posen well to the east were 25,000 men under General Lestocq.

As to how these forces were to be used at the

onset of hostilities was the subject of protracted and often acrimonious debate. No less than five main plans emerged. Scharnhorst (Blücher's able chief of staff, soon to be seconded to the Duke of Brunswick) put forward the most sensible scheme – to await the arrival of the Tsar's armies (perhaps 120,000 strong) already said to be assembling under General Count Levin Bennigsen on the River Bug, if necessary trading space for time in a series of holding actions in the Thüringerwald, along the Elbe, or even in extremity on the Oder – were Napoleon to get his blow in first. Several present at once claimed that such a Fabian plan would compromise the army's honour, and it was therefore dropped.

Secondly, Hohenlohe put forward the idea of awaiting Napoleon around Erfurt and Hof, taking up positions so as to outflank the *Grande Armée*. This was promptly vetoed as too defensive (although in fact it was not to be very far removed from what was actually to occur in mid-October albeit through force of circumstances rather than by design).

Thirdly, Brunswick pressed for the superficially attractive concept of moving a single, strong army through Erfurt towards Würzburg and thence forwards to threaten Stuttgart in the hope of catching the French in their cantonment areas or at least of compromising their communications with France. But predictably the jealous Hohenlohe spoke strongly against this plan, advocating instead a more easterly move through Hof on Bamberg. This was also ruled out when it was realized that it would involve stringing out the three armies along a 90-mile front, with only the smallest of reserves near Naumburg. Massenbach then put forward the wildest idea of all – an apparently pointless *parade militaire* by the Silesian army (his own, naturally) through Hof to the Danube and thence back into Saxony. At last the



exasperated king intervened in the wrangling and imposed yet another plan, involving the implementation of the main features of both Brunswick's and Hohenlohe's operational schemes – a compromise that pleased nobody.

The pervading air of pessimism notwithstanding, the reams of preliminary orders had already been issued to implement the king's scheme, when on 27 September the council of war suddenly reverted to the adoption of Brunswick's original plan *in toto*. The rusty cogs of the Prussian military machine were agonizingly put into reverse as further paper quires of orders were rushed to the regiments, and a state of chaos ensued as attempts were made to reorganize. Hardly had this process started than the bright Captain Carl von Müffling returned from a reconnaissance on 5 October with the alarming news that Napoleon in person had some days before already left the Würzburg/Bamberg area and was advancing with a large force towards Bayreuth and Coburg as if intending to invade Saxony. At once the whole issue was back in the melting-pot and more time was wasted as the news and its implications were hotly debated. Should the Prussians draw up behind the Saale, or should all three armies join near Leipzig? Nobody, however, reverted to Scharnhorst's plan.

As he lamented: 'What we ought to do I know right well; what we shall do, only the gods know.'

At length the Prussian junta made up its mind – or rather had a decision forced upon it by developing circumstances, for Napoleon had already taken the initiative as was ever his wont. In order to 'defeat them by an oblique and rapid movement against the direction they will be following', the Prussian Army was now ordered to mass west of the Saale so as to threaten the French western flank. Strong cavalry forces, supported by the Duke of Weimar's infantry detachment, were to probe the French communications towards Neustädt and Hildburghausen. The remainder of Brunswick's army was to reach Weimar by 9 October before moving on towards Blankenheim. Hohenlohe was to reach Höchdorf on the same day, before concentrating at Rudolstädt to the west of the Saale. A small part of Tauentzien's reconnaissance force was left to watch Hof, while Rüchel was to send detachments towards the Fulda Gap to increase the threat to Napoleon's rear, his main force marching from Eisenach to make contact with Brunswick between Gotha and Fulda. The 13,000-strong General Reserve was to move from Magdeburg to Halle, ready to join Brunswick at Leipzig or Naumburg as events



◀ Queen Louise and Prussian staff officers, by Myrbach. While the Prussian King and his generals wrangled, Queen Louise carried through a demanding programme of inspections of army formations, designed to place a sharp edge upon their mettle. Her efforts were rewarded with considerable success, and her popularity reached new heights. (Philip J. Haythornthwaite Collection)

might dictate. This represented a reasonably sound plan, but the detail was excessive; and this weakness permitted Hohenlohe, jubilant that his senior's plan for a drive on Würzburg had been abandoned, to presume that *his* concept for a placing of troops east of the Saale was also agreed, at least by implication. Accordingly, without reference to his commander-in-chief, he promptly ordered the Saxon corps to Auma and Schleiz, while a further division under Prince Louis Ferdinand was moved to Saalfeld. The result was to place these isolated detachments directly in the path of Napoleon's advance – with consequences that were not going to work to Hohenlohe's nor indeed Prussia's, advantage.

On 26 September the Prussian government had issued a formal ultimatum. Unless Napoleon withdrew all French troops over the Rhine, restored Cleves, Ansbach and Neuchâtel, accepted the North German League (Prussia's attempt to set up an alternative organization to the Confederation) and agreed to discuss all other points at issue, and formally notified his full acceptance by 8 October, Prussia would declare war on the French Empire. As we shall see later, Napoleon's reaction to this was to be direct, pre-emptive and to the point.

### Napoleon's Operational Plan

While the Prussians wavered indecisively, Napoleon was completing his own mobilization plans. The Tsar's final refusal to ratify the 1805 Peace convinced the Emperor that there was serious trouble afoot. Even if the Prussians were a month ahead of him in terms of war preparations, he had every intention of pre-empting their offensive. Accordingly 5 September found Berthier ordered 'to send engineer officers to make full reconnaissances of the roads from Bamberg to Berlin, taking all necessary risks'. He was also told to be ready to assemble the army at Bamberg within a week of receiving the executive order.

Paradoxically, the very indecision of the Prussians caused Napoleon considerable difficulty. As intelligence reports began to arrive at *Grand Quartier Général*, he found Prussian movements quite incomprehensible. 'Prussian movements

continue to be most extraordinary,' he informed Berthier on 10 September. 'They need to be taught a lesson. My horses leave [Paris] tomorrow and the Guard will follow in a few days' time ... If the news continues to indicate that the Prussians have lost their heads, I shall travel directly to Würzburg or Bamberg.' Clearly, Napoleon was still leaving his options open.

The Emperor considered three possible plans for the Campaign of 1806. His problem was to devise a means of ensuring the decisive defeat of Prussia without exposing French territory – or that of its allies – to invasion, and ideally before Russia could intervene in the struggle. Austria would also bear watching; and, as always, 'perfidious Albion'.

Two possibilities were soon discarded. A direct advance on Berlin from Wesel on the Rhine through Hanover would involve the French in a major force reorientation, and provide ample warning of what was afoot. Secondly, an offensive from Mainz through the Fulda Gap towards Eisenach, and thence to Magdeburg or Leipzig, was closer to the present French cantonments but major river obstacles would be encountered, and this could drive the Prussians back towards their Russian allies.

Thirdly, there was an operational plan based upon Würzburg and Bamberg, leading to a major drive north-eastwards towards Gera, Leipzig and, once again, Berlin. The advantages of this plan were that the French Army was already well placed for such a move, and that it would drive a salient between the Prussians and Bennigsen. This involved the passage of the difficult Thüringerwald over the three available passes, but thereafter the Saale and Elster would protect the French flanks.

On 15 September Napoleon made up his mind. Firm news had arrived of the Prussian incursion into Saxony. That being the case, the best route evidently lay through Bamberg. Over a period of 48 hours, in a prodigious demonstration of his working capacity, Napoleon dictated no less than 120 separate orders. The whole army was forthwith placed on a fully mobilized basis. The Imperial Guard at once left Paris in convoys of special wagons to cover the 550 kilometres to beyond Mainz, reaching that city on the 27th. Most important was the lengthy 'General Dispo-



▲ **Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland, by Hodges.** Louis (1778–1846) was Napoleon's younger brother, and married to his step-daughter, Hortense de Beauharnais (Josephine's daughter) – a match that did not prove successful and ended in separation. He had acquired some military experience over the years – serving as one of his elder brother's aides-de-camp during the Italian

campaign of 1796–7. In 1804 he was appointed Constable of the Empire, and from September 1805 he was given command of all troops in Holland. The following May he was crowned King of Holland. Napoleon regarded him as too easy-going on his subjects, and Louis abdicated his throne in July 1810. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

sitions for the Assembly of the Grand Army', a document which formed the basis for the whole campaign. Three crucial dates were emphasized. By 2 October, Angereau's VII, Ney's VI and Bernadotte's I Corps were to have concentrated at Frankfurt, Nuremberg and Ansbach respectively, ready in all respects to march. By the end of 3 October, Davout's III Corps was to have moved

from Nördlingen to Bamberg, there to join GQG, while Lefebvre's V Corps was to have reached Königshofen, with the artillery and baggage trains at Würzburg. And by 4 October, Soult's IV Corps was to be at Amberg following a lengthy march from its cantonments on the River Inn.

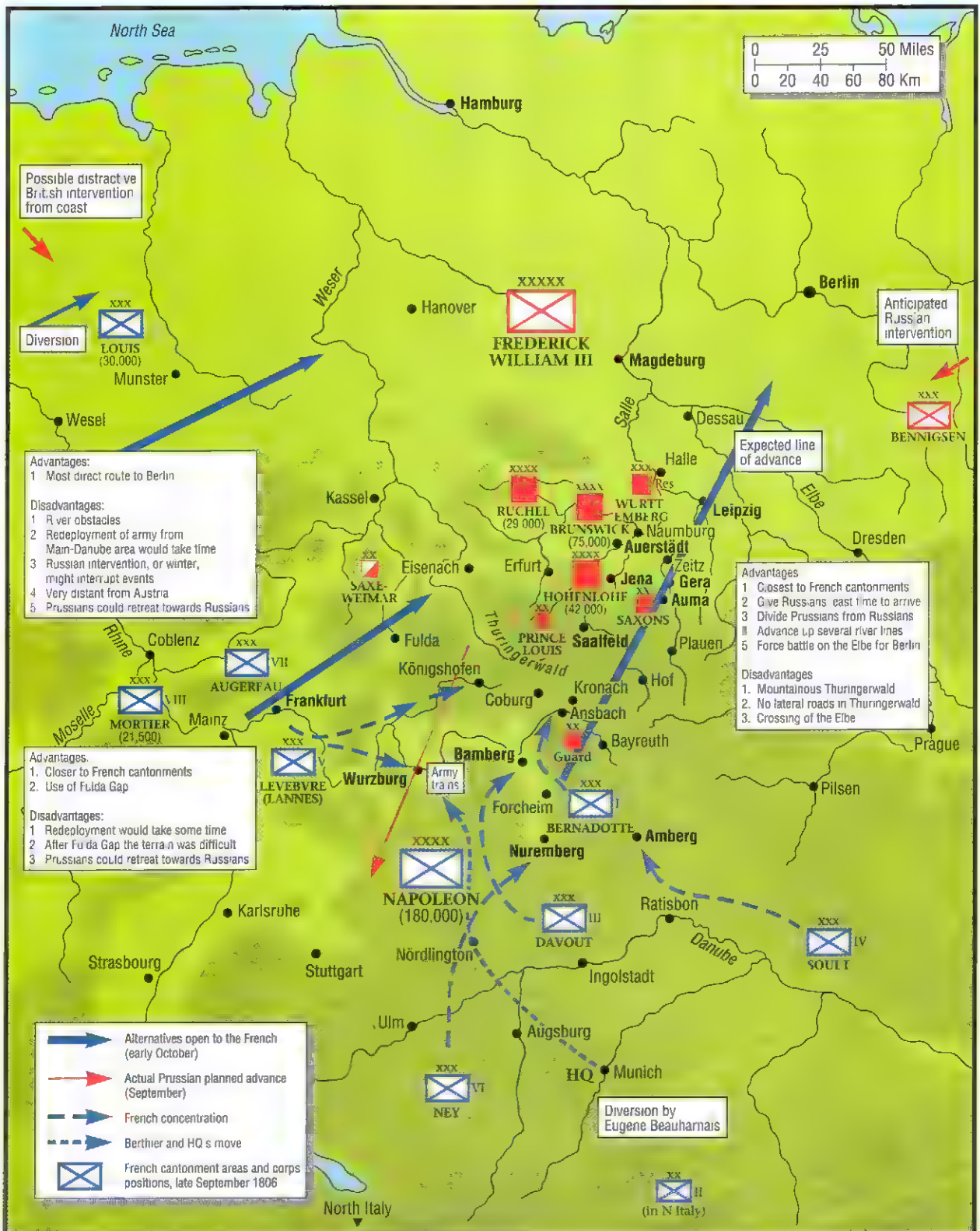
Already two documents had been sent to Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland, spelling out his diversionary role from Wesel on the Rhine. 'Hasten to mobilize your troops,' Napoleon enjoined his younger *fratello*. 'Reunite all available forces so as to deceive them [the Prussians] and protect your frontiers while I leap into the centre of Prussia with my army, marching directly on Berlin . . . As my intention is not to attack from your side, I desire you to open your campaign on 1st October.' To strengthen the right flank of the Dutch forces Napoleon ordered Marshal Mortier to form the VIII Corps at Mainz. In the event of a rapid French success in central Germany, Louis and Mortier were to advance and occupy Cassel and Hamburg. These forces would also serve conveniently as the 'anvil' for Napoleon's 'hammer' should the Prussians after all occupy the weakly defended area between Bamberg and Mainz.

Thus the requirements of security, diversion and exploitation were all carefully balanced. 'I only count on your forces to serve as a means of diversion to amuse the enemy up to 12 October,' the Emperor continued in a missive dated the 30th, stressing the need for firmness at all costs. To complete his precautionary measures (which illustrate Napoleon observing his own maxim that 'The whole art of war consists in a well-reasoned and extremely circumspect defensive, followed by a rapid and audacious attack'), the Emperor mobilized Eugène Beauharnais and a reinforced Army of Italy to keep a watch on Austria. The possibility of a British descent over the Channel would be met by Marshal Brune's 16,000 men aided by Marshal Kellermann's 8,000-strong reserve from Paris and 2,000 cavalry from the interior. The precautions were comprehensive.

The time for action was now near. Napoleon's personal entourage (including the Empress Josephine for the earlier stages) set out from Paris early on Thursday, 25 September. On 2 October



# French Invasion of Saxony and Napoleon's Alternative Plans



Napoleon reached Würzburg and took over formal command from a relieved Berthier. On the 6th he moved on to Bamberg. By an ironic chance France's written reply to the Prussian ultimatum (which Napoleon received on the 7th) only reached the Prussian king on the 14th – in the middle of Jena–Auerstädt.

A major clash of arms was now obviously imminent. From Würzburg Napoleon issued to Marshal Soult a full operational order:

'I have caused Würzburg, Forchheim and Kronach to be occupied, armed and provisioned, and I



▲ *Eugène de Beauharnais* by Scheffer. Eugène (1781–1824) was Josephine's son by her first marriage to General Alexandre de Beauharnais (who was executed during the French Revolution) and thus Napoleon's stepson. He served as an aide-de-camp to Massena in Italy and to his step-father

in Egypt, and in 1804 was promoted general and appointed Arch-Chancellor of State. He was created a Prince of the Empire early in 1805, and then Viceroy of Italy in June. He was to prove an able commander, and retained Napoleon's trust. (Philip J. Haythornthwaite Collection)

propose to debouch into Saxony with my whole army in three columns. You are at the head of the right-hand column with Marshal Ney's Corps half a day's march behind you and 10,000 Bavarians a day's march behind him, making altogether more than 50,000 men. Marshal Bernadotte leads the centre, followed by Marshal Davout's Corps, the greater part of the Reserve Cavalry, and the Guard, making more than 70,000 men. He will march by way of Kronach, Lebenstein and Schleiz. The V Corps [now under Lannes, Lefebvre reverting to his Guard command] is at the head of the left, having behind it Marshal Augereau's Corps. This wing will march by way of Coburg, Grafenthal and Saalfeld, and musters over 40,000 men. The day you reach Hof the remainder of the army will have reached positions on the same alignment. I shall march with the centre.

'With this immense superiority of force united in so small a space you will realize that I am determined to leave nothing to chance, and can attack the foe wherever he chooses to stand with nearly double his strength ... If the enemy opposes you with a force not exceeding 30,000 men, you should concert with Marshal Ney and attack him ... On reaching Hof, your first care should be to open communications between Lebenstein, Ebersdorf and Schleiz. From news that has come in today [5 October] it appears that if the foe makes any move it will be towards my left; the bulk of his forces seem to be near Erfurt. I cannot press you too earnestly to write to me frequently and keep me fully informed of all you learn from the direction of Dresden. You may well think that it will be a fine thing to move around this area in a "battalion square" of 200,000 men. Still, this will require a little skill and a little luck.'

And so, indeed, it was to prove. Early on 8 October the move into the defiles of the Thuringian Forest began, crossing the Saxon frontier without opposition. Each of the three columns was headed by light cavalry, who, following their orders, began to empty every letter-box and to interrogate every peasant they met amidst the passes. Napoleon was aware that he was taking considerable risks, and that his knowledge of Prussian movements was incomplete. But that is the usual way in war.

# ‘THE BATTALION SQUARE’ IN ACTION

The French campaign swung into action early on 8 October. Preceded by reconnoitring cavalry, three powerful columns entered Saxon territory and headed for the three passes through the Thüringerwald. On the left, Lannes’ V Corps,

▼ *Napoleon’s Way of Travelling, by Myrbach. For major moves, Napoleon rode in his specially designed post-chaise – containing a folding bed, a desk, bookshelves and lockers, which permitted the Emperor to continue working on the move. General Caulaincourt, Master of the Horse, rode at one window, the Marshal-of-the-Day on duty at the other, with more generals and aides-*

*de-camp behind. Ahead of the entourage rode two orderly officers charged with clearing the way, followed by another officer and twelve cavalymen. The main escort – usually provided by four squadrons of Guard Cavalry – followed 1,000 metres to the rear of the coach. For shorter journeys Napoleon used a light coach, or rode on horseback. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)*

followed by Augereau’s VII Corps, totalling some 41,000 men, set out from around Schweinfurt and headed for Coburg and distant Saalfeld hard by the river of that name. In the centre, Bernadotte’s I Corps, followed by Davout’s III Corps, Sahuc’s heavy cavalry and the Guard (making in all some 70,000 troops, with Napoleon and headquarters bringing up the rear) marched north from Bamberg heading for Kronach and distant Lebenstein. On the right, emerging from the area of Bayreuth, Soult’s IV Corps, followed by Ney’s VI and ultimately the Bavarian Corps (perhaps 50,000 men in all) marched for Münchberg and Hof.

Napoleon was confident that even if enemy forces blocked one, or even two, of the pass exits, they would never hold all three – and the one emerging column would be in a position to envelop the hostile holding forces and thus release their delayed comrades. Lateral communications would





**French advance:**

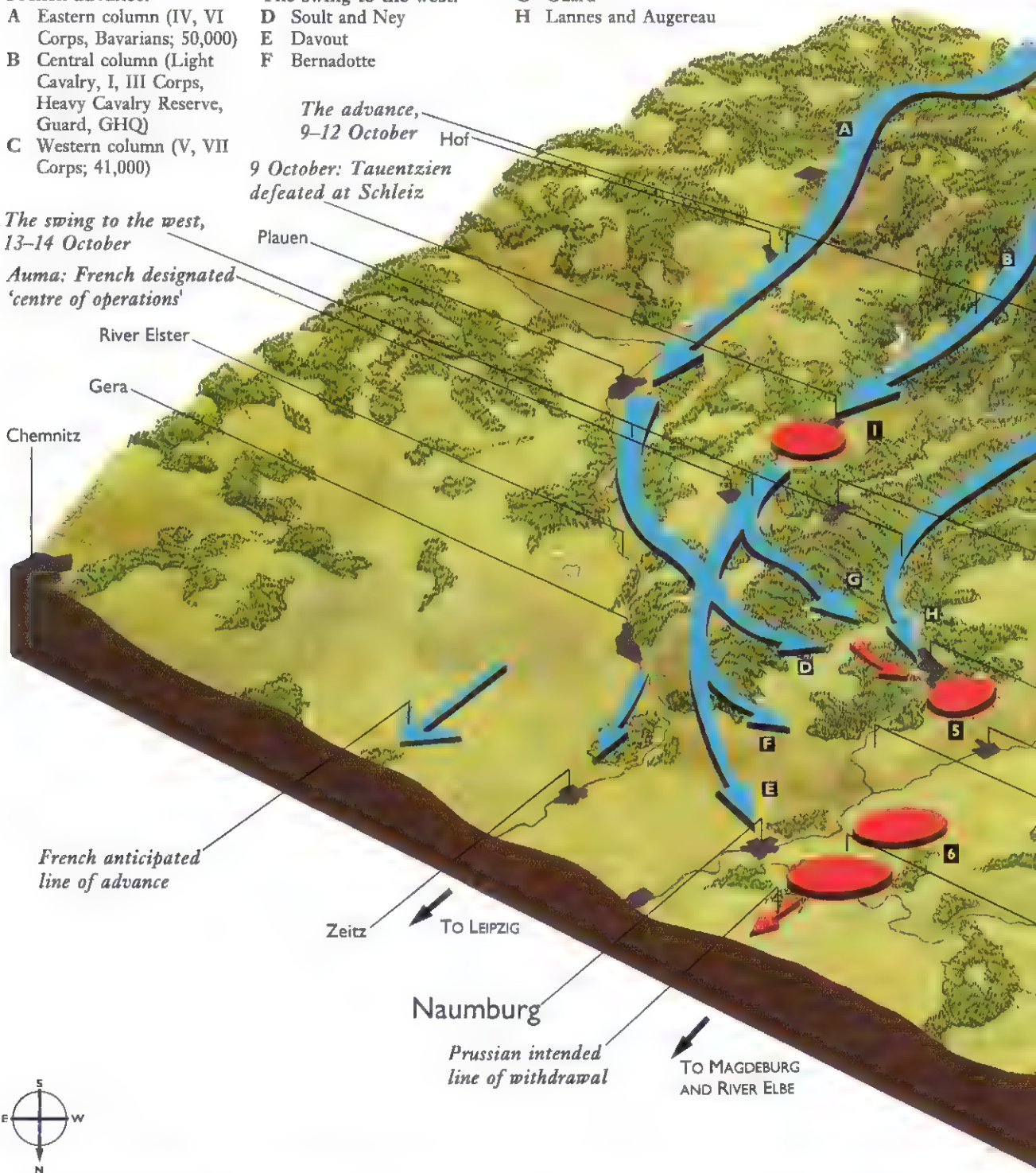
- A Eastern column (IV, VI Corps, Bavarians; 50,000)
- B Central column (Light Cavalry, I, III Corps, Heavy Cavalry Reserve, Guard, GHQ)
- C Western column (V, VII Corps; 41,000)

**The swing to the west:**

- D Soult and Ney
- E Davout
- F Bernadotte

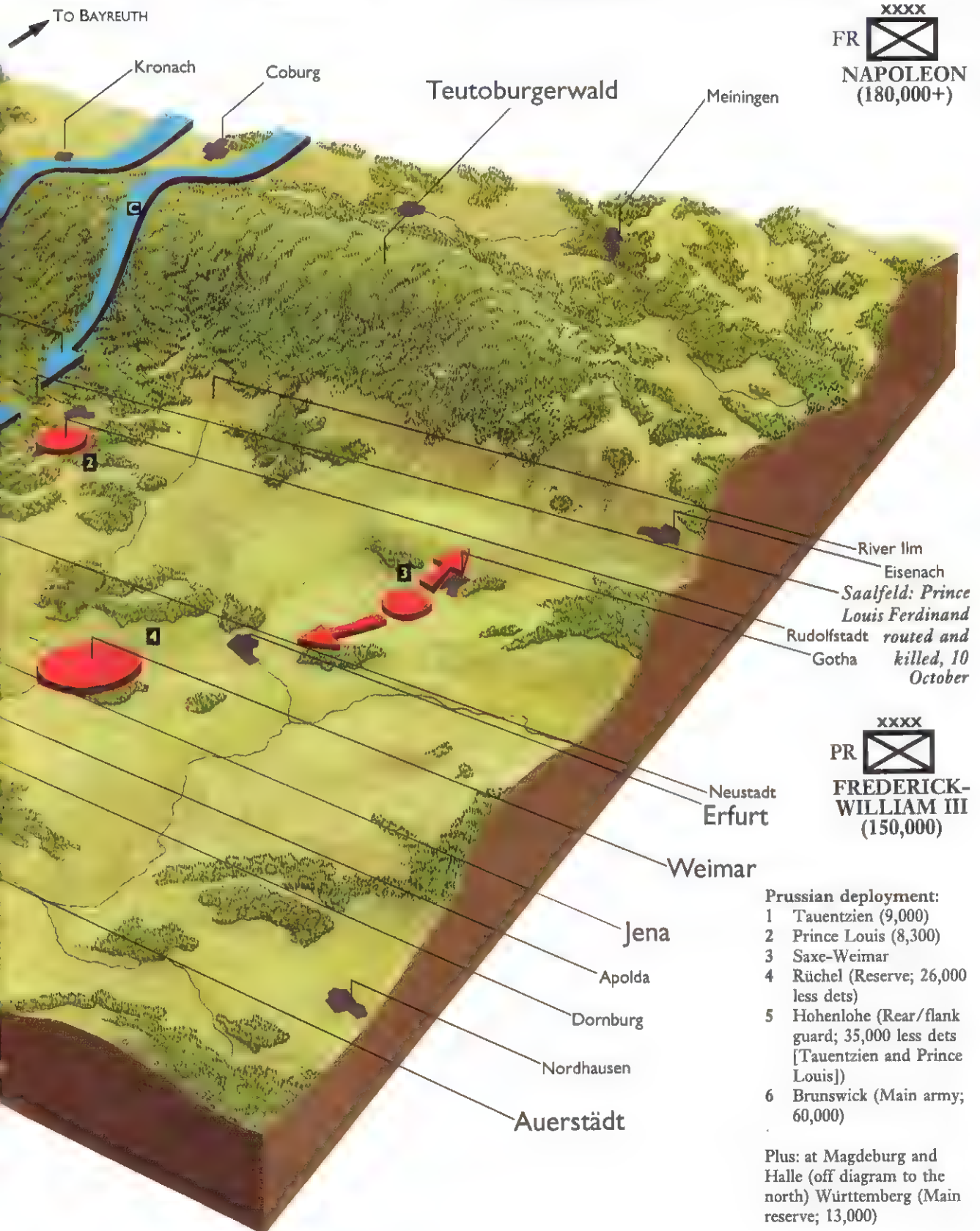
**G Guard**

- H Lannes and Augereau



## STRATEGIC ADVANCE OF 'LE BATAILLON CARRE'

The advance to Jena and Naumburg, 9-14 October 1806, as seen from the north





be non-existent for a critical period as the crossing took place, but mutual support, flexibility and the ability to create local superiority of force on any sector were all built into the master-plan.

Late on the 8th the main Prussian forces were situated as follows: the Duke of Weimar was commanding the advance guard, exploring the roads towards Fulda and Schweinfurt; Rüchel was at Eisenach with the smallest force; Brunswick's main army was covering a large area from near Langensalza to Gotha and Erfurt; and Hohenlohe's army – thanks to that officer's strong wilfulness – was scattered over a broad area, with detachments on the River Saale at Jena and Rudolstädt, and the remainder well to the east of that river-line, Zeschwitz being around Mittel-Pollnitz, while Prince Louis Ferdinand was commanding 8,300 men in an advanced detachment near Saalfeld, and General Tauentzien was at the head of 9,000 near Schleiz. Finally, General Württemberg commanded the reserve of some 13,000 men at Magdeburg on the mighty Elbe (soon to move south to Halle). But the Prussians still had no clear plan of action.

▲ *The Death of Prince Louis of Prussia near Saalfeld, 10 October 1806, by J. L. Rugendos. As the Grande Armée left the defiles of the Thüringerwald, the most serious engagement took place close to Saalfeld. General Suchet's division of Lannes' V Corps,*

*heading the westernmost column, engaged the 8,300 men and 44 guns of Prince Louis' command and a two-hour engagement followed. The French triumphed for a loss of only 142 men killed – the death of Prince Louis-Ferdinand causing his men to flee in disorder.*

Just 72 hours after the start of their movement the French were safely through the Thüringerwald. The first day had seen a little cavalry action around Saalburg on the central axis of advance. The 9th saw French advanced detachments at or near Saalfeld, Schleiz and Hof respectively – and the cavalry and part of Bernadotte's I Corps had an easy success over Tauentzien at Schleiz. Early on 10 October Brunswick ordered all Prussian and Saxon forces to regain the west bank of the Saale as part of a general concentration of all forces around Erfurt – but this instruction came too late for Prince Louis Ferdinand who had already set out to execute Hohenlohe's order to cover efforts





**Ahead the way now lay open for Lannes to reach Jena. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)**

**▲ Death of Prince Louis at Saalfeld by Myrbach. As French numbers began to tell, Prince Louis-Ferdinand led a gallant**

**charge of five squadrons of Prussians against the French centre. He was engaged in personal combat by Quartermaster Guindet of the 10th Hussars, cut-down and killed (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)**

being made to rally Tauentzien's men. At the combat of Saalfeld, the Prince was killed in mounted combat with Quartermaster Guindet of the 10th Hussars, and his force routed, losing 2,800 men and 25 guns.

So far, so good – but Napoleon still had no clear idea of his enemy's centre of gravity. A report from Soult that the garrison of Plauen were retreating north convinced the Emperor that Leipzig might well be the critical point – so the French columns received orders to press ahead for Auma and Gera. In fact Hohenlohe was by this time heading through Kahla for Jena to the west of the Saale. Still operating in the dark, the French

reconnaissance parties found no sign of the foe either at Gera or towards Leipzig. But all options were being carefully kept open. 'A general should say to himself many times a day,' Napoleon would write later, "If the enemy army were to make its appearance to my front, on my right, or on my left, what should I do?" And if he is embarrassed his arrangements are bad; there is something wrong; he must rectify his mistake.'

Then, suddenly, on the 11th the first firm news came in from the left wing revealing large Prussian forces positioned west of the Saale near Erfurt. Napoleon at once warned his commanders to be ready to fight on the 16th, probably near Erfurt. Auma was to be the new centre of operations. 'This campaign promises to be even more miraculous than that of Ulm or Marengo,' wrote Davout to Berthier on the 12th. Events were to prove him right.

With hardly any confusion the whole French Army conducted a 90-degree turn towards the Saale. Lannes and Angereau now became the advance guard, Davout and Bernadotte the right wing, Ney and the heavy cavalry the left, and Soult the rearguard as '*le bataillon carré*' demonstrated its superb flexibility.

The 12th found Napoleon at Gera, with time to write to Josephine. 'I am today at Gera, dearest love, and everything is going very well . . . My health remains excellent, and I have put on some weight since my departure. Yet I travel from 20 to 25 leagues each day, on horseback, in my carriage, etc. I retire to rest at eight o'clock and rise at midnight. I sometimes imagine that you will not yet have retired to bed.' The brief lull was abruptly shattered at 9 a.m. on the 13th. The latest reports from Murat, Davout and Angereau revealed that Weimar rather than Erfurt was the location of the main enemy, whose overall intention was now considered to be a retreat northwards. Disturbingly, there was still no firm news from Lannes – closest to the enemy. 'At last the veil is torn,' Napoleon wrote to Murat. 'The enemy begins his retreat towards Magdeburg . . . From two o'clock I shall be at Jena.'

Riding fast towards Jena, Napoleon's 'little headquarters' was at last met by a courier from Lannes. His dispatch revealed that some 30,000

enemy troops were between Jena and Weimar, and that V Corps was occupying the Landgrafenberg feature overlooking the town on the west bank of the Saale. Was he to remain there or press ahead towards Weimar? Napoleon rode on to join his subordinate, summoning the infantry of the Imperial Guard. He now realized that the battle might materialize after all on the 14th near Jena. Orders were sent flying off to Augereau and Soult, commanding them to reach Jena early on the 14th ready to take post on Lannes' left and right flanks respectively. Davout on the far right was to march west through Naumburg '... so as to attack the

enemy's left', and Bernadotte was to carry on towards Dornburg. Murat was to follow I Corps, and Ney was to force-march to Jena itself.

The following table shows the remarkable French build-up over the River Saale that the 'battalion square's' flexibility made possible:

Midday (13th):	Lannes' V Corps.	Total troops present: 21,000
Midnight (13th):	V Corps plus the Guard Infantry.	Total: 25,000
10 a.m. (14th)	as above plus VII Corps and part IV Corps.	Total: 50,000
Midday (14th):	the above plus remainder of IV Corps, VI Corps and the Cavalry.	Total: 90,500
4 p.m. (14th):	plus some Light Cavalry, III and I Corps.	Total: 145,500

To concentrate almost 100,000 men at a single point in just 24 hours – or practically 150,000 in 28 hours – ready to fight 48 hours ahead of the originally estimated date – illustrates Napoleon's mastery of time and distance problems. 'The art of war', he would write, 'is like everything else that is

▼*Hellish Weather!*, by Vernet. Although the Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard were provided with special wagons for their journey from Paris to the frontier, thereafter they had to march like the rest of the army. The daily march averaged about nineteen kilometres, but in emergencies they could

*be expected to cover all of thirty-two – as on 13 October 1806 when Napoleon ordered them to join him at Jena by a forced march. Bad weather made the soldiers' lot even less pleasant. (P.J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*



► *The French Artillery Track leading up towards the Landgrafenberg feature, author's photograph. The gradient is steeper than it appears.*



beautiful and simple. The simplest moves are the best.' But the 14th was nevertheless to hold some considerable surprises.

In fact he had only half-divulged the Prussian intentions. A council-of-war early on the 13th had decided against an all-out confrontation with the French at Jena. Instead the main army was to retreat north though Apolda towards Halle, covered by Hohenlohe (supported by part of Rüchel's force) serving as a flank guard near Jena.

After studying the scene from the summit of the Landgrafenberg with Lannes at his side, Napoleon clearly believed the entire Prussian Army was nearby. Surprised that the enemy was not trying to probe the French position, Napoleon realized that guns must be placed atop the main feature without the least delay, although the sole route was a narrow earthen track. The night was cold as the Guard infantry and artillery passed over the Saale at 10 p.m. through a dark and silent Jena. In their ranks marched Grenadier Jean-Roche Coignet. 'We were obliged to grope our way along the edge of the precipice . . . It was necessary to keep perfect silence, for the enemy was near us. We immediately formed a square, with the Emperor in the middle of the Guard. Our artillery came to the foot of this terrible mountain, and not being able to pass over it, the road had to be enlarged and the rocks cut away. The Emperor was there, directing the engineers; he did not leave

until the road was finished, and the first piece of cannon, drawn by twelve horses, had passed on in front of him, in absolute silence.' In fact the commander of the corps artillery had lost his way, and attempted to pass his guns up a narrow ravine towards Cospeda. His leading gun became jammed between two large rocks, and it took much hard work to free it and thus permit the movement of the guns waiting on to the plateau above.

Later in the night Napoleon allowed each company to light two or three fires, and permitted foraging parties to go back into Jena. 'We found a great deal of sealed wine in the hotels,' Coignet recalled. '... every grenadier had three bottles, two in his bearskin cap and one in his pocket. All night long we had warm wine.' Soon part of the town was on fire as French looters got out of hand.

Napoleon roughed out his plan for the 14th. The first task would be for V Corps to advance over the plateau and gain deployment room for the arriving army. As its strength built steadily up, Davout and Bernadotte – if still together near Naumburg – would strike towards Apolda and cut the Prussian line of retreat. A postscript to an order to Davout was added to this effect by Berthier, and sent off at 10.30 p.m. 'If . . . Bernadotte is with you, you can march together, but the Emperor hopes that he will be in the position assigned to him at Dornburg.' This afterthought was to have a dramatic outcome. The



first sets of battle orders were issued to nearby formations and units. Restlessly, and decidedly cold, men and horses awaited dawn.

Farther to the north, Prince Hohenlohe's Prussians huddled around their fires. Nearest to the French, bivouacked in and around the villages of Closewitz and Lützeroda, and upon the slightly higher ground beyond (the Dornberg) was Tauentzien's command, some 8,000 men strong. Four miles to the north-east, General Holtzendorf's 5,000 men camped on the high ground overlooking the Saale bridge at Dornburg, with a cavalry detachment still further north watching the crossing at Kamburg. The remaining 22,000 soldiers were grouped to the west in and around the villages of Isserstedt, Kötschau, Kapellendorf and Gross Romstedt.

On both sides men and animals passed a cold and apprehensive night. Near Naumburg, meanwhile, eight miles south of Jena, Marshal Davout in person visited his colleague, the Prince of Ponte Corvo, at about 1.30 a.m. Bernadotte was haughty and dismissive. He had not the least intention, he forcibly informed the grim-faced Burgundian, to alter his orders for I Corps' march on Dornburg on the sole authority of a scribbled postscript. Davout gave his rival a cold, hard stare. Then, clapping on his white-feather-fringed hat, he turned on his heel and marched out into the misty night, slamming the door behind him. 'Tant pis', he was heard to mutter as he heaved himself into the saddle and spurred off westwards to rejoin his III Corps. Twelve fateful hours later and Davout and his men would have earned eternal fame. As for Bernadotte, he would have put himself – almost – in line for a court-martial.

► *The Emperor Napoleon by Charlet. In 1806, Napoleon was to find his skill in adapting to circumstances tested to the full. Not only the direction of the enemy, but also the date and place of battle were none of them precisely foreseen; and the actual engagement – fought on two battlefields – also*

*represented a major surprise. But – ever the opportunist and master of the alternative plan – Napoleon was nevertheless to achieve one of his greatest campaign successes before October 1806 was over. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library).*



# THE OPPOSING COMMANDERS

## The French Commanders in 1806

In October 1806 the Emperor Napoleon was in his prime. Aged 37 years and two months, he had already enjoyed a dazzling career. Receiving command of his first army in 1796, his reputation as a soldier had been rapidly established in North Italy. Further achievements – and setbacks – in Egypt and Syria had prepared the way for his return to France in late 1799 to take the lead in the *coup d'état de Brumaire* which ultimately saw him emerge as First Consul. A second successful campaign in Italy paved the way towards a general peace in 1801, and the following years saw the start of Napoleon's immense legal and administrative reforms and changes within France. War with England had recommenced in mid-1803, but remained mainly naval in character, and Napoleon's constructive works continued. Plots against his life increased his popularity with his adopted people still further; and, after being made Consul-for-Life, in 1804 a plebiscite elevated him to Emperor (the coronation taking place on 2 December), and the following year he was also crowned King of Italy in Milan. In the autumn of 1805 the War of the Third Coalition broke out, leading to possibly Napoleon's greatest campaign of all – that of Ulm and Austerlitz. Married since 1796 to Josephine, the only severe disappointment in his life was the Empress's failure to provide him with an heir. But there was no denying that Napoleon Bonaparte had come a long way since his youth in Corsica.

Since 1796 Napoleon had been served as Chief of Staff by Louis Alexandre Berthier, sixteen years his elder. Berthier had been a commissioned cartographical engineer since 1766, and seen service in the War of American Independence as well as the French Revolution. Transferred from the Army of the Alps, he soon earned Napoleon's



▲ **Louis Alexandre Berthier, by J Outhwaite.** *Probably the greatest chief of staff in history, Berthier (1753-1815) served Napoleon in this capacity for all his major campaigns – except the very last. Like his master, he was capable of continuous and unrelenting hard work. His greatest skill was in*

*directives into clear, concise orders for transmission to subordinates. Created Prince of Neuchâtel and Vallengrin on 30 March 1806, he would in due course also be made Prince of Wagram in mid-August 1809. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library).*

complete trust and became his key military assistant. After *Brumaire* Berthier was for a time Minister of War, but his place was at Napoleon's side in time of war. He had technically com-

▼ *Louis Nicolas Davout, engraving by Muller after Marzocchi. Davout (1770–1823) had made his reputation at Austerlitz in December 1805, when his forced-march from Vienna to reinforce the Grande Armée outside Brunn had played a vital part in the outcome of the great battle. But it was to be his brilliant*

*performance at Auerstädt on 14 October 1806 – once again at the head of his experienced III Corps – that earned him the rather grudging admiration of his master and the applause of the French Army. Well-earned was his nickname of ‘the Iron Marshal’. (P.J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*



manded the Army of the Reserve during the Marengo campaign of 1800, as constitutionally a Consul could not hold such a position. Made a Marshal of the Empire in May 1804, in early 1806 he was created Prince of Neuchâtel. Short in stature and rather stout, he was liked for his generally amiable nature – and his skills as a senior staff officer were unsurpassed. Second only to his master as a hard worker, he had a great gift for writing clear, concise orders on the Emperor's behalf. In later years, however, he was to prove less competent in occasional independent commands. As Napoleon remarked on St. Helena: 'There was not in the world a better Chief of Staff; that is where his true talent lay, for he was not capable of commanding 500 men.'

Besides Berthier, there were no less than nine more Marshals of the Empire present with the Emperor in Saxony – or ten if we include Mortier at Mainz. Two require separate mention here – Davout and Bernadotte.

Louis-Nicolas Davout was born in 1770 into the Burgundian nobility. Commissioned into the Bourbon cavalry in 1788, he enjoyed mixed fortunes during the early years of the French Revolution but survived to be appointed General of Brigade commanding the cavalry attached to General Desaix's division in the Army of the Orient in 1798. This brought him to Napoleon's attention for the first time. An austere, out-spoken and ruthless soldier, he was not popular with most of his contemporaries or subordinates, but he was known to be incorruptible and to possess a brilliant mind. His appointment as the youngest Marshal of the 1804 creation surprised many – and was uncharitably ascribed to his second marriage (a first had ended in divorce) in 1801 to Aimée Leclerc, whose brother was married to Napoleon's sister, Pauline. After commanding the Camp of Bruges 1803–5 with great efficiency, he formed and commanded III Corps of the *Grande Armée* in the campaign of 1805, playing a vital role at the Battle of Austerlitz. But it was to be his superb martial conduct in October 1806 which was to earn him an immortal reputation and (in 1808) the title of Duke of Auerstädt. On St. Helena Napoleon described Davout as '... one of the purest glories of France'.



Paradoxically, in 1806 Jean Baptiste Bernadotte was destined both to suffer the nadir of his career as well as to lay the foundations of his future good fortune. Born in Gascony in 1763, the son of a master-tailor, he had enlisted in the Bourbon forces in 1780, and ten years later had risen to the rank of regimental sergeant-major. Promoted lieutenant in 1791, he fought with flamboyant distinction in the Army of the North, and in 1794 he became a General of Division. In January 1797, he was posted to Italy where he first came to Napoleon's attention. After a short spell as Ambassador to Vienna, he was for a time Minister of War and then commanded the Army of the West. Politically a left-wing Jacobin, he disapproved of Napoleon's appointment as First Consul. However, his marriage in 1798 to Désirée Clary (Napoleon's sometime girl-friend, whose elder sister was married to Joseph Bonaparte) and his undoubted abilities kept his name in Napoleon's mind, and (like Davout) he was awarded the baton of Marshal in May 1804. Next year he commanded I Corps at Austerlitz, and in June 1806 he swallowed his republican principles and became Prince of Ponte-Corvo. As we shall see below, his conduct on 14 October almost earned him a court-martial – but Napoleon had second thoughts (possibly on Désirée's account) and gave him a second chance. His subsequent courteous treatment of Swedish officers made prisoners-of-war at Lübeck was to make his fortune, for he would become Crown-Prince and ultimately King of Sweden (1818), founding the sole Napoleonic dynasty that survives to the present.

### Prussian Commanders in 1806

Titular commander-in-chief of the Prussian-Saxon Army on 14 October 1806 – and actual commander of his main army in the final disastrous stages of the Battle of Auerstädt – was Frederick-William III, King of Prussia. A year younger than Napoleon, he was born at Potsdam in 1770, and 27 years later succeeded his father, Frederick-William II, to the throne. In 1793 he had married the beautiful and strong-willed Francophobic Louise, Princess of Mecklenberg-



▲ *Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, by Blood. A flamboyant Gascon, Bernadotte (1763-1844) was one of the Marshalate who had emerged from the non-commissioned ranks of the Bourbon Army. An early reputation for extreme left-wing, or Jacobin, views (he had the slogan 'Death to Tyrants' tattooed on one arm) had not precluded his preferment to high rank by Napoleon. His*

*marriage to Désirée Clary probably accounts for his escaping dire punishment after his misconduct at the head of I Corps on 14 October 1806. But the same year would see him making first Swedish contacts at Lübeck which would later lead him to a Nordic throne – and thus establish the sole lasting Napoleonic reigning dynasty. (P.J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*

Strelitz, who was to have no small influence over the events of 1806 and 1807, and would earn Napoleon's considerable respect in the process. Prussia had avoided involvement in the War of the Second Coalition (1799-1802), but was on the point of joining the Third in late 1805 when the outcome of Austerlitz caused a last-minute change of policy, with results already described in the first chapter. Of a somewhat vacillating disposition, but ultimately influenced by his domineering wife, the



▲ *Queen Louise of Prussia. (Author's Collection)*

King found himself manoeuvred by the court 'War Party' into forming the Fourth Coalition with Great Britain, Russia and Sweden during the late summer of 1806. Although without the least pretensions to any military skills or capabilities, he interfered in the planning of the military operations and accompanied his army into the field in September. Thus was set in train a series of events that would end in the bitter humiliation of Prussia at Tilsit in July 1807, and a condition of virtual subordination to the French Empire that would last until the end of the Russian campaign of 1812 and the subsequent adherence of Prussia to the Sixth Alliance. Over the two years that followed Frederick-William would be present at several major battles alongside his allies, and ultimately see Napoleon brought low – in 1814 and then finally in 1815. Frederick-William died in 1840.

Under the monarch, the senior command was exercised by Charles William Ferdinand, Duke of

Brunswick. Born in 1735, he had seen much service in mid-18th century warfare, rising to high command under Frederick the Great during the Seven Years War. Particularly noted as a commander of infantry, in 1792 he had served as overall commander of the forces of the First Coalition that invaded France only to be checked at the cannonade of Valmy. Far from being a tactful soldier, he proved incapable of effective co-operation with the Austrians, and following defeat by General Hoche at Wissemburg in 1793 he retired to his estates. However, his earlier reputation and well-known hatred for the French led to his being summoned out of retirement in 1806 and



▲ *Charles William Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick (1735-1806), by Houston. Aged 71, Brunswick was in 1806 commander-in-chief of the Prussian Army. With much experience dating back to the mid-18th century, and with first-hand knowledge of fighting French republican armies in 1792, it seems that he had learnt little during his long career. A version of his*

*plan of campaign for 1806 had eventually been accepted, but he was to prove no match for Napoleon strategically or for Davout at the operational level. He was destined not to survive the hard-fought battle of Auerstädt. (P.J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*

reappointed to high command. He was destined to be mortally wounded at Auerstädt.

Brunswick's personal rival was Friedrich Ludwig, Prince of Hohenlohe. Aged 60 in 1806, he was a member of an ancient Württemberg family who entered the Prussian service in 1768 and soon rose to high command in the wars against France. In 1794 he had been driven back into the Palatinate by Hoche, abandoning all Prussian possessions on the Rhine. After Jena in 1806 he tried to rally the remnant of the Prussian Army, but was eventually forced to surrender at Prenzlau in Pomerania two weeks later. He would be kept a prisoner of war until 1808.



▲ **Frederick Louis, Prince of Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen.** Commander of the Prussian forces at Jena, Prince Hohenlohe (1746-1818) – a Württemberger by birth – had been a soldier in the Prussian service since 1768. Brave but excessively headstrong, he was massively defeated on 14 October 1806. Rallying the remnant of the Prussian Army, he retreated as far as Pomerania before

surrendering at Prenzlau on 28 October. He remained a prisoner in French hands until 1808 when he was released on parole. (Author's Collection)

Commander of the so-called 'Third Army' in 1806 was General Ernest Philip von Rüchel. Born in Pomerania in 1754, he had entered the Prussian service in 1771 and served on Frederick the Great's staff. Made a general in 1794, he held the post of governor of Potsdam from 1796. Ten years later he survived serious wounds received on the afternoon of 14 October, and thereafter lived mainly in retirement until 1823.

Of the more subordinate officers in the campaign of 1806, three deserve special notice. The 33-year-old Prince Louis-Ferdinand of Prussia was noted as a cultivated man of great administrative and military potential. His death while



▲ **Prince Louis-Ferdinand,** engraving by E. E. Scradin. Potentially the most gifted Prussian soldier of the post-Frederickian era, Prince Louis-Ferdinand (1773-1806) was deeply involved with the economic and social reforms that the King of Prussia was tentatively introducing. Progress was far too slow for his taste, but he retained the favour of the monarch. He was a strong

Prussian patriot and a prominent member of the court War Party. His martial abilities were also considered to be potentially of a very high order, but he was never to be able to display them to the full. Some charged him with impetuosity. He was destined to be killed at Saalfeld on 10 October 1806 aged 33 years. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)





▲ **Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst (1755–1813)** was one of the ablest soldiers in the early 1800s. A Hanoverian by birth, he first served in 1788 and fought in the Duke of York's campaign in Flanders five years later. Despairing of promotion in the Hanoverian army, he transferred his sword to Prussia in 1801. Turning down an offer to command the embryonic Royal Military College in England, he instructed at the Berlin War Academy.

*His value was rapidly recognized, and by 1806 he was one of the troika of Prussian chiefs-of-staff – but to his adopted country's loss found much of his excellent advice disregarded. After Prussia's final humiliation at Tilsit (1807), he worked with Stein, Hardenburg and Gneisenau to rebuild the Prussian army. He would be mortally wounded at the battle of Lützen in 1813. (The Peter Hofschröder Collection)*

commanding a Prussian division at Saalfeld on 10 October 1806 was lamented throughout Prussia, depriving his country of probably its most promising commander and administrator.

General Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher (1742–1819) was a cavalryman with a great reputation for dash. A Mecklenburger by birth – the son of a retired infantry officer – he entered the Prussian service in 1760, after serving in the Swedish cavalry in three campaigns against Prussia. His wild behaviour attracted the criticism of Frederick the Great, and from 1773 until 1786 he

lived as a gentleman farmer. After Frederick's death he recommenced his career as soldier in the rank of major. In 1793 he served with distinction against the French Revolutionary armies, and next year was given command of a hussar regiment. After a superb success near Landau he was promoted to major-general in June 1794. Long years of peacetime soldiering followed, the Francophobic Blücher being openly critical of Prussia's failure to re-enter the wars against France, but in 1806 his wish for active service was fulfilled. After taking a prominent role at Auerstädt, he would eventually be taken prisoner at Rackau on 6 November. His greatest years lay ahead, from 1813 to 1815. Distinctly eccentric, his valour was undoubted.

Colonel Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst served as Chief of Staff to the Duke of Brunswick in 1806. Born in Hanover in 1755, he entered its army in 1788. After teaching at a military academy, he served under the Duke of York in Flanders in 1794. Eventually despairing of promotion he transferred to the Prussian service in 1801, where his talents soon won him preferment. After Jena he would head the Prussian military reform movement and become noted as a leading patriot.



# THE OPPOSING ARMIES

## The Grande Armée of 1806

With the splendid achievements of 1805 behind them, the troops Napoleon commanded in Saxony and Prussia the following year were probably the best trained and most effectively integrated he would ever lead. After the Peace of Pressburg, the Emperor led 160,000 troops (comprising six *corps d'armée*, 32,000 cavalry, 300 cannon and 13,000 Bavarian and Württemberger allies) east of the Rhine in a broad sweep of cantonments to the Rivers Main and (ultimately) Danube. By the climax of the campaign of 1806, this total would have risen to almost 300,000. Only two divisions – those of Generals Dupont and Gazan (parts of Marshal Bernadotte's I Corps and Marshal Lannes's V Corps respectively consisted largely of newly conscripted men. The gaps in other formations were of course filled with raw drafts from the regimental depots, but in terms of morale and experience, *La Grande Armée* of 1806 was in a class of its own.

As the constituent parts, equipment and organization (including the versatile *corps d'armée* system) of the French Army have already been described in the *Austerlitz 1805* volume in the Osprey 'Campaign Series', it is not proposed to repeat that information here, but rather to concentrate on tactical and grand tactical aspects for which there was no room in the earlier book.

Armed with the 1777-pattern Charleville .70 calibre musket, a 15-inch bayonet and sword,

carrying 24 rounds of powder and ball in his *giberne*, the French infantryman was trained to perform several tactical evolutions. For battlefield movement (and occasionally for breaking through enemy lines if sufficiently weakened), the infantry battalion formed in 'column of divisions'. With the 'light' (or *voltigeur*) ninth company deployed forward as a skirmisher screen, the remaining eight companies (each comprising about 140 all ranks) formed up three ranks deep on a two-company frontage. Allowing for intervals between ranks, a closed up column covered a frontage of 50 yards (or 50 files, 25 per company) and had a depth of some 21 yards (or twelve ranks). An attack would be mounted by a whole series of battalion columns of this nature, formed in line or echelon, chequer-board fashion, with proper intervals between them. By the Drill Book of 1791 these columns were trained to deploy into three-deep line within 100 yards of their opponents, and open volley or individual fire, before charging home with the bayonet.

Light infantry (or *tirailleur*) battalions habitually fought in extended skirmisher order as individuals, although they could also be fought in regular linear formation as the situation required. Most carried the standard '1777' smooth-bore musket, but officers and NCOs of *voltigeur* companies carried rifled carbines. The officers were trained to assess the opposition ahead, and report back to higher commanders.

A French formation which Napoleon is known to have favoured was the 'mixed order' (*l'ordre mixte*). In this, a standard three-battalion regiment would form one battalion in line and place the remaining two in column of divisions on either flank. This formation combined fire with shock action, and was highly flexible. All French infantry units were trained to be able to change formation rapidly – from the column's *l'ordre profonde* into

◀ *French Grenadiers by Vernet. The élite Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard wore distinctive bearskin-fur caps on important occasions, and enjoyed an unequalled reputation for valour. They enjoyed many*

*privileges. In addition, each battalion of line infantry (nine companies strong) would include one company of Grenadiers on its establishment. (P.J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*



line (*l'ordre mince*), from line into square in the event of cavalry attack, and from any into *l'ordre mixte*. Morand's handling of his division at Auerstädt is an excellent example of this daunting degree of tactical flexibility (see p. 76).

Cavalry – cuirassiers, dragoons or light – were divided into regiments of four, five and six or more squadrons respectively, each squadron being further divided into two companies (or troops). Twin squadron charges were the main method of attack, but great stress was laid on discipline in action – particularly on rallying following a charge. Light cavalry – hussars, *chasseurs à cheval* and the like – were trained (as were dragoons) in reconnaissance and pursuit duties. The bulk of the 'heavies' often constituted the basis of the Reserve Cavalry, under the Emperor's own command, but the cavalry division or brigade attached to each *corps d'armée* usually included units of all three mounted categories of *l'arme blanche*. Cuirassiers and carabineers still wore breast and back plates. Armed with swords or sabres, pistols and carbines, the cavalry formed a spectacular part of *la Grande Armée*.

The guns – organized into batteries of foot, horse or 'flying' artillery – were 12pdr, 8pdr and 6pdr smoothbores, and 6in howitzers. Many of the heaviest calibre – the 'Emperor's beautiful daughters' – were increasingly formed into the Reserve Artillery under army command. The gunners were trained to use their cannon flexibly in action, using solid shot for longer-range targets and case-shot for closer work. At Jena Napoleon would make use of a massed battery for the first time. Under the Emperor's eye – originally a gunner himself – the artillery was of a very high standard. 'It is with guns that wars are made,' he once stated.

Every engagement was of course a unique occasion, but a typical sequence of grand tactical action at corps level – where Napoleon invariably delegated local command to his marshals or senior generals, rarely interfering in detail once his overall plan had been issued except to allocate (or refuse) reserves – was often as follows. Many a

◀ *The Sentry, by Détaillé.*  
(Author's Collection)





▲ *Imperial Guard Grenadier, by Colin. On routine duties, a Grenadier often wore a bicorne hat instead of the bearskin. Many were holders of the much sought after decoration, the white enamel cross on a watered red ribbon – the*

*légion d'honneur. (P.J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*



▲ *French light-infantry soldier, by Vilain. Distinguished by their tall shako-plumes, light infantry in the Grande Armée came in two main types. Each line battalion included one company of voltigeurs (literally 'leapers') who in action*

*formed a skirmishing screen ahead of the unit. After the Grenadiers, they formed the second élite company. In addition there were complete tirailleurs regiments. (P.J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*

Napoleonic battle opened with a heavy artillery bombardment, designed to cause casualties and thus shake the enemy's morale. Under cover of this, the light infantry would swarm forward in order to dominate no man's land while their officers carefully studied the enemy dispositions on their sectors, passing back intelligence to their seniors in the rear.

Next, elements of the corps cavalry would be sent to the front in the hope of drawing enemy squadrons to engage them. In such a case, after a brisk mêlée, the enemy horsemen would withdraw, whereupon the French cavalry would fall upon his infantry, compelling them to form square. It was

very rare for a formed square to be broken if it kept its ranks and files closed up, but such a formation often proved an excellent target for the French horse artillery accompanying the cavalry. As their horsemen fell back to reform, the horse-guns would unlimber and pour in fire at point-blank range, causing much damage to their opponents.

Behind the diversion caused by these activities the French infantry columns would be advancing through the smoke of battle to the beat of drums interspersed with loud cries of *'Vive l'Empereur!'*. In the hope of catching the enemy regiments still in square (thus reducing their output of frontal

# ORDER OF BATTLE LA GRAND ARMÉE

Commander-in-Chief: the Emperor Napoleon

Chief of Staff of the Army: Marshal Louis Alexandre Berthier

## The Imperial Guard

**Marshals François Joseph Lefebvre (Guard Infantry)**  
**and Jean Baptiste Bessières (Guard Cavalry)** (8,725 all ranks)  
 Chief of Staff of the Guard: Gen of Bde François-Xavier Roussel

### Infantry of the Guard:

Brigade: Gen of Bde Jérôme Soules  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 1er Rég't de Chasseurs à Pied (light infantry)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 2ème Rég't de Chasseurs à Pied  
 Brigade: Gen of Bde Pierre Augustin Huin  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 1er Rég't de Grenadiers à Pied (foot grenadiers)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 2ème Rég't de Grenadiers à Pied  
 Brigade: (command vacant)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 1er Rég't de Dragons à Pied (mounted dragoons)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 2ème Rég't de Dragons à Pied

### Cavalry of the Guard:

Brigade: Col Nicholas Dahlmann  
 Rég't de Chasseurs à Cheval brigaded with Les Mameluks  
 Brigade: Gen of Div Frédéric Henri Walther  
 Rég't de Grenadiers à Cheval (mounted grenadiers)  
 Les Gendarmes d'Elite

### Artillery of the Guard:

Gen of Bde Joseph Christophe Couin  
 Artillerie & Train d'Artillerie de la Garde  
 Dets of 2ème & 6ème Comps (batteries) du 1er Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 (foot artillery - gun-crews marched beside cannon)  
 Det of 6ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheva (horse artillery - gunners rode on ammunition caissons, limbers or on horseback alongside cannon)  
 (20x8pdrs, 14x4pdrs and 8x6in howitzers) = 42 guns, 106 caissons and 171 wagons

Approximate strength at Jena: 12 Bns & 10 Sqns = 8,725 (including 2,862 cavalry and 712 gunners and troupes de train), 42 guns & 277 vehicles

## Grand Park of the Army

**The Reserve Artillery: Gen of Bde Boyvin de Lamartinière**  
 (712 all ranks)

Part of 1er Comp du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 Parts of 8ème et 11ème Comps du 6ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 Parts of 16ème et 18ème Comps du 7ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 Parts of 1er et 5ème Comps du 3ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheva  
 1er Comp des Artisans d'Artillerie  
 12ème Comp des Artisans d'Artillerie  
 Comp des Artisans du Train  
 Comp of 1er Bn de Nassau  
 Det of 3ème (b) Bn du Train  
 two Dets of 8ème (bis) Bn du Train  
 Det of 9ème Bn Principal du Train  
 Det of 1er Div de Réquisitions  
 2ème Div de Réquisitions  
 Det of 27ème Bde de Réquisitions  
 (8x12pdrs, 8x8pdrs, 4x4pdrs and 7x6in howitzers) = 27 guns.

### The Bridging Train:

2ème et 7ème Comps du 1er Bn des Pontonniers  
 Det of 3ème Bn Principal du Train  
 Det of 8ème (bis) Bn du Train  
 Det of 9ème Bn Principal du Train (370 all ranks)

### The Engineering Park:

1st Brigade: Gen of Bde Chambarlhac  
 2ème et 6ème Comps des Mineurs  
 6ème Comp du 4ème Bn des Sapeurs  
 1er Comp du 1er Bn des Sapeurs  
 Det of 5ème Bn des Sapeurs  
 2nd Brigade: Gen of Bde Cazals  
 4ème et 5ème Comps des Mineurs  
 3ème et 4ème Comps du 2ème Bn des Sapeurs  
 1er et 3ème Comp du 4ème Bn des Sapeurs (307 all ranks)

Approximate strength of Guard Park at Jena: 1,389 men, 27 cannon & 137 vehicles

## I Corps

**Marshal Jean Baptiste Bernadotte**

Corps Chief of Staff: Gen of Div Victor Leopold Berthier

**1st Division: Gen of Div Pierre Dupont de l'Étang** (6,713 all ranks)

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Marie François Rouyère,  
 (b) François Marie Guillaume Legendre d'Harvesse  
 1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 9ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 32ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 96ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
 Divisional Artillery: 6ème & 11ème Comps du 1er Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 1er Comp du 2ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheva  
 Dets of 3ème (bis), 5ème Principal et 8ème (bis) Bns du Train  
 Note 'b's' designates a double Bn  
 (2x12pdrs, 8x6pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 12 guns

**2nd Division: Gen of Div Olivier Rivaud de la Raffinière** (5,776 all ranks)

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Michel Marie Pachod, (b) Nicolas Joseph Maison  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 8ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 45ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
 1st, & 2nd Bns of 54ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
 Divisional Artillery: 1er Comp du 8ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 2ème Comp du 3ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheva  
 Det of 2ème Bn Principal du Train  
 (4x6pdrs, 4x3pdrs and 2x7pdrs) = 10 guns

**3rd Division: Gen of Div Jean Baptiste Drouet** (5,978 all ranks)

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Bernard George Frère, (b) François Werlé  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 27ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 94ème Rég't de Ligne under (b)  
 1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 95ème Rég't de Ligne under (b)  
 Divisional Artillery: 2ème Comp du 8ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 3ème Comp du 3ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheva  
 Det of 2ème Bn Principal du Train  
 (8x6pdrs, 6x3pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 16 guns.

**Corps Artillery Reserve: Gen of Div Jean Baptiste Eblé**

6ème Comp du 88ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 1er Comp du 3ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheva  
 Det of 2ème Bn Principal du Train  
 1er Comp du 1er Bn des Pontonniers (bridging company)  
 4ème & 8ème Comps des Artisans (pioneer troops)  
 Det of Gendarmerie (military police)  
 (6x12pdrs and 6x3pdrs) = 12 guns

**Corps Cavalry: Gen of Div Jacques Louis François Delaître Tilly**

Brigade  
 1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 2ème Rég't des Hussards (Hussars)  
 1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 4ème Rég't des Hussards  
 1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 5ème Rég't des Chasseurs à Cheval

Approximate strength at Jena: 18 Bns & 9 Sqns = 21,163 (including 1,623 cavalry, 1,073 gunners and troupes de train), 50 guns & 461 vehicles.

Approximate total strength of La Grande Armée at Jena-Auerstadt on 14 October 1806

Gross strength: 200,716 and 341 guns. After allowing for detachments, stragglers and sick, it is estimated that the net strength of approximately 145,500 men of all arms and 166 cannon were in action or close by on 14 October 1806 (of whom 28,800 men and 46 guns fought at Auerstadt). Troops actually in action at Jena totalled 96,000 and 120 guns.

### Sources

P.J. Foucart, *La Campagne de Prusse, 1806* - Jena (Paris, 1887)  
 P. Bressonnet, *Etudes tactiques sur la campagne de 1806* (Paris, 1909)  
 and information provided by Comdr G. Nafziger USNR, and M. Gray, Esq.

NOTE: this ORBAT includes Allied troops but NOT VIII Corps (Marshal Mortier), who deployed 22 Bns, 4 Sqns (21,464 effectives) and 30 guns at Mainz - used (with Louis Bonaparte's approx 30,000 Dutch Troops) to mount distractions along the Rhennish frontiers of Prussia, and eventually occupied Hanover on 10 November 1806

Continued overleaf

## III Corps

(NB at Auerstädt on 14 Oct): Marshal Louis Nicolas Davout

Chief of Staff: Gen of Bde Joseph Augustin Marquis Daultane  
 Senior-grade staff officers: Co's Hervo, Romeuf and Beaupre  
 ADCs: Co's Burke, Facon and Louis Alexandre Davout (brother of the Marshal)  
 Artillery staff: Gen of Bde Antoine Hanique and Col Charbonnel  
 Engineer commander: Col Touzard

1st Division: Gen of Div Charles Antoine Morand (9,867 all ranks)

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Jean Louis Debilly, (b) Etienne Brouard,  
 (c) Bonnet d'Honnieres  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 13ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère (Col Guyardet) under (c)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 17ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Lanusse) under (b)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 30ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Valterra) under (b)  
 1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 51ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Baille) under (a)  
 1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 81ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Nicolas) under (a)  
 Divisional Artillery: 11ème Comp du 7ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 1st & 6th Dets of 1er Rég't Principal du Train  
 (5x8pdrs, 7x4pdrs, 1x6in howitzer) = 13 guns

2nd Division: Gen of Div Louis Friant (7,293 all ranks)

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Georges Kister, (b) Pierre Lochet,  
 (c) Louis Grandjean  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 33ème Rég't de Ligne (Comdt Cartier) under (a)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 48ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Barbanègre) under (a)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 108ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Higonet) under (b)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 111ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Gay) under (c)  
 Divisional Artillery: 2ème Comp du 7ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 2ème Comp du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval  
 3rd & 6th Dets of 1er Rég't Principal du Train  
 (5x8pdrs, 2x4pdrs, 1x6in howitzer) = 8 guns

3rd Division: Gen of Div Etienne Gudin (8,473 all ranks)

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Claude Petit, (b) Nicolas Hyacinthe Gautier  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 12ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Vergès) under (a)  
 1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 21ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Decous) under (a)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 25ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Cassagne) under (b)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 85ème Rég't de Ligne (Col Valais) under (b)  
 Divisional Artillery: 3ème Comp du 7ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 2ème Comp du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval  
 4th & 5th Dets of 1er Rég't Principal du Train  
 (5x8pdrs, 2x4pdrs, 1x6in howitzer) = 8 guns.

Corps Artillery Reserve and Park: Gen of Bde Antoine Hannicque

2ème, 3ème & 15ème Comps du 7ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 1er Comp du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval; Les Artisans de l'Artillerie  
 1st, 3rd & 4th Dets of 1er Rég't Principal du Train  
 2nd & 5th Dets of 1er Rég't Principal du Train  
 1st, 3rd, 5th & 6th Dets of 3ème Rég't (bis) du Train  
 Det of drafted horse-teams and wagons  
 6ème Comp du 2ème Bataillon du Génie (engineers)  
 Detachment of Gendarmes  
 (8x12pdrs (captured Austrian guns), 8x8pdrs, 3x6in howitzers) = 17 guns.

Corps Cavalry: Gen of Bde Jean Baptiste Théodore Viallanes

Brigade:  
 1er, 2ème & 3ème Esc du 1er Rég't de Chasseurs à Cheval (Col Exelmans)  
 1er, 2ème & 3ème Esc du 2ème Rég't de Chasseurs à Cheval (Col Bousson)  
 1er, 2ème & 3ème Esc du 12ème Rég't de Chasseurs à Cheval (Col Guyon)

Approximate strength of III Corps present at Auerstädt: 29 Bns & 9 Sqns  
 approximately 28,936 men (including 1,622 cavalry and 1,681 artillery and train troops), 46 guns & 264 vehicles

\* Special Note: in recognition of the special distinction earned by III

Corps at Auerstädt on 14 October 1806, names of the senior Corps Staff  
 officers and all commanding colonels of regiments are given above in the case  
 of this formation only

## IV Corps

Marshal Nicolas Jean de Dieu Soult

Corps Chief of Staff: Gen of Bde Jean Dominique Compans

1st Division: Gen of Div Louis de Saint-Hilaire (7,497 all ranks)

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Jacques de Candras, (b) Louis Prix Waré  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 10ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 35ème Rég't de Ligne under (a)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 43ème Rég't de Ligne under (b)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 55ème Rég't de Ligne under (b)  
 Divisional Artillery: 12ème & 17ème Comps du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 1st & 2nd Dets of 1er (bis) Bn du Train.  
 (2x12pdrs, 8x6pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 12 guns.

2nd Division: Gen of Div Jean François Leval (10,176 all ranks)

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Schinner, (b) Ferrey, (c) Vivès  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 24ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 4ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
 1st, & 2nd Bns of 28ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
 1st, & 2nd Bns of 46ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (c)  
 1st, & 2nd Bns of 57ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (c)  
 Divisional Artillery: 13ème & 17ème Comps du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 3rd & 5th Dets of 1er (bis) Bn Principal du Train  
 (2x12pdrs, 8x6pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 12 guns.

3rd Division: Gen of Div Claude Juste Legrand (7,629 all ranks)

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) François Ledru des Esarts, (b) Victor Levasseur  
 1st & 2nd Bns of 26ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
 Tirailleurs Corses (Corsican light infantry) under (a)  
 Tirailleurs du Po (Light infantry from River Po, North Italy) under (a)  
 1st, & 2nd Bns of 18ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
 1st, & 2nd Bns of 75ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
 Divisional Artillery: 14ème & 17ème Comps du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 3ème Comp du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval  
 1st, 3rd, 4th & 5th Dets of 3ème Bn Principal du Train  
 (4x12pdrs, 6x6pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 12 guns.

Corps Artillery Reserve and Park:

16ème & 17ème Comps du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
 Dets of 1er (bis) & 3ème Bns Principal du Train  
 7ème Comp d'Artisans de l'Artillerie  
 6ème Comp du 1er Bn des Pontonniers  
 9ème Comp du 2ème Bn du Génie  
 Det of Gendarmes  
 (8x6pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 10 guns.

Corps Cavalry: Gens of Bde (a) Pierre Margaron, (b) Etienne Guyot

Brigade:  
 1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 8ème Rég't des Hussards under (a)  
 1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 22ème Rég't de Chasseurs à Cheval under (a)  
 1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 11ème Rég't des Chasseurs à Cheval under (b)  
 1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 16ème Rég't des Chasseurs à Cheval under (b)  
 Artillery: 4ème Comp du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval  
 2nd Det of 3ème Bn Principal du Train  
 (4x8pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 6 guns.

Approximate strength of IV Corps at Jena: 26 Bns & 12 Sqns = 28,960  
 (including 1,876 cavalry, 1,782 gunners and troupes de train), 52 guns &  
 260 vehicles.



# ORDER OF BATTLE LA GRAND ARMÉE

*Continued from overleaf*

## V Corps

### Marshal Jean Lannes

Corps Chief of Staff: Gen of Div Claude-Victor Perrin (called Victor)

**1st Division: Gen of Div Louis Gabriel Suchet** (11,436 all ranks)  
Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Michel Claparède, (b) Honoré Reille, (c) Dominique Vede

1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 17ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Bns of 34ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 40ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 64ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (c)  
1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 88ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (c)  
Divisional Artillery: 15ème Comp du 5ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
3ème Comp du 3ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval  
4th & 5th Dets of 3ème Principal Bn du Train  
(2x12pdrs, 6x8pdrs, 2x4pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 12 guns.

**2nd Division: Gen of Div Honoré Théodore Gazan** (7,500 all ranks)  
Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Jean Grandorge, (b) François Campana  
1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 21ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
1st & 2nd Bns of 28ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 100ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 103ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
Divisional Artillery: 5ème Comp du 1er Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
3ème Comp du 6ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
4th & 5th Dets of 5ème (b.s.) Bn du Train  
(2x12pdrs, 8x6pdrs 4x3pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 16 guns.

**Corps Artillery Reserve: Gen of Bde Louis Foucher de Careil**  
2ème Comp du 1er Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
3ème Comp du 6ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval  
1st & 6th Dets of 5ème (b.s.) Bn du Train  
Det of Artisans du Train  
4th Det of 1er Bn des Pontonniers  
2ème & 5ème Comps du 2ème Bn de Génie  
Det of Gendarmerie  
(4x12pdrs, 4x6pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 10 guns.

### Corps Cavalry:

Brigade: Gen of Bde Anne François Treillard  
1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 9ème Rég't des Hussards  
1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 10ème Rég't des Hussards  
1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 21ème Rég't des Chasseurs à Cheval

Approximate strength of V Corps at Jena: 27 Bns & 9 Sqns = 21,744 (including 1,680 cavalry, 1,128 gunners and troupes de train), 38 guns & 354 vehicles

## VI Corps

### Marshal Michel Ney

Corps Chief of Staff: Gen of Bde Adrien Jean Baptiste Dutailly

**1st Division: Gen of Div Jean Gabriel Marchand** (8,419 all ranks)  
Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Eugène Vilatte, (b) François Roguet  
1st & 2nd Bns of 6ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
1st & 2nd Bns of 39ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st & 2nd Bns of 69ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st & 2nd Bns of 76ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)

**2nd Division: Gen of Div Gaspard Amédée Gardanne** (8,581 all ranks)  
Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Pierre Marcognet, (b) Mathieu Delabassée  
1st & 2nd Bns of 25ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
1st & 2nd Bns of 27ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st & 2nd Bns of 50ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st & 2nd Bns of 59ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)

### Corps Artillery Reserve (NB including divisional allocations).

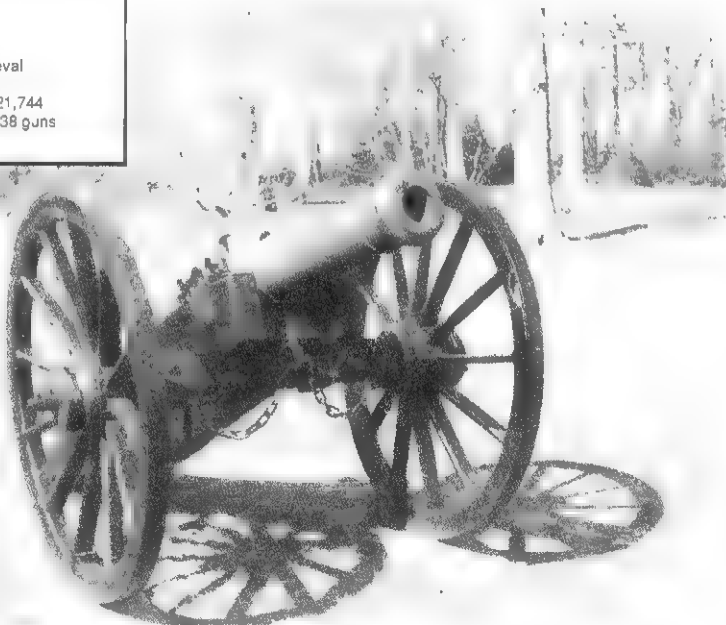
9ème, 10ème, 11ème & 12ème Comps du 1er Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
1er & 5ème Comps du 2ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval  
4ème Bn des Artisans d'Artillerie  
1st & 5th Dets of 3ème (b.s.) Bn Principal du Train  
1st to 6th (inclusive) Dets of 5ème Bn Principal du Train  
2ème Comp du 4ème Bn de Génie  
7ème Comp des Mineurs d'Artillerie  
Detachment of Gendarmerie  
(4x12pdrs, 12x8pdrs, 4x4pdrs and 4x6in howitzers) = 24 guns.

### Corps Cavalry Reserve:

Brigade: Gen of Bde Auguste Colbert de Chabanaux  
1er, 2ème, 3ème & 4ème Escs du 9ème Rég't des Hussards  
1er, 2ème, 3ème & 4ème Escs du 10ème Rég't des Chasseurs à Cheval

Approximate strength of VI Corps at Jena: 17 Bns, 6 Sqns = 19,267 (including 944 cavalry, 1,323 gunners & train), 24 guns & 337 vehicles.

► **French 12-pounder cannon. Pieces of this size were attached to army corps and the Artillery Reserve. Nicknamed 'the Emperor's beautiful daughters', the 12pdrs had a maximum range of about 1,800 metres, but were most effective up to 900 metres. Each piece of this size nominally had a gun-crew of fifteen artillerymen. (Author's Collection)**



## VII Corps

**Marshal Charles Pierre François Augereau**

Corps Chief of Staff: Gen of Bde Claude Marie Joseph Pannetier

**1st Division: Gen of Div Jacques Desjardin (8,242 all ranks)**

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Pierre Lapisse, (b) Jacques Lefranc  
1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th Bns of 18ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
2nd Bn of 14ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 44ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 105ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
Divisional Artillery: 44ème Comp du 3ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
2ème Comp du 6ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval  
3rd & 6th Dets of 8ème Bn Principal du Train  
(2x12pdrs, 4x6pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 8 guns.

**2nd Division: Gen of Div Etienne Heudelet de Biere (6,817 all ranks)**

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) François Arney, (b) Jacques Sarut, (c) unknown  
1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 7ème Rég't d'Infanterie Légère under (a)  
1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns of 24ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st & 2nd Bns of 63ème Rég't d'Infanterie de Ligne under (b)  
1st & 2nd Bns of Hesse-Darmstadt Rég't des Fusiliers under (c)  
3rd Bn of Rég't d'Infanterie de Nassau under (c)  
Divisional Artillery: 3ème Comp du 3ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
2ème Comp du 6ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval  
4th & 5th Dets of 8ème Bn Principal du Train  
(2x12pdrs, 4x6pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 8 guns.

#### Corps Artillery Reserve:

5ème Comp du 3ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
4th & 5th Dets of 8ème Bn Principal du Train  
12ème Comp des Artisans de l'Artillerie  
3ème Comp de 1er Bn de Pontonniers  
(4x12pdrs, 8x8pdrs and 4x6in howitzers) = 16 guns.

#### Corps Cavalry:

Brigade: Gen of Bde Antoine Jean Auguste Durosnel  
1er to 4ème Escs du 7ème Rég't de Chasseurs à Cheval  
1er, 2ème & 3ème Escs du 20ème Rég't de Chasseurs à Cheval  
Artillery: 5ème Comp du 6ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Cheval  
1st Det of 8ème Bn Principal du Train = 4x4pdrs

Approximate strength of VII Corps at Jena: 17 Bns & 7 Sqns = 17,672 French (including 1,290 cavalry, 1,323 gunners and train), 36 guns & 384 vehicles. Also a total of 13,653 Allies \*\*

\*\*Besides Frenchmen, VII Corps included 6,473 Württembergers, 4,086 Hesse-Darmstadt, 4,154 Baden, 2,250 Nassau, 2,008 Würzburgers, 970 men from the Prince Primate, and 85 men from Hesse-Homburg. These were all contingents from the Confederation of the Rhine, most of whom (save for the regiments listed above) carried out garrison and line of communication duties for the Grande Armée. For administrative purposes they were all grouped as parts of VII Corps under the Hessian Gen of Div de Werner.

There was also a weak Bavarian Corps of two Divisions (under Gens of Div B.E. Deroy and C-P Wrede) comprising 7,358 and 6,299 effectives respectively. These further Allies were also mainly employed on secondary duties, but during the post-Jena-Auerstätt pursuit phase they formed the basis of the new IX Corps under the command of Jérôme Bonaparte.

IMPORTANT: please note that all unit and formation strengths are to be regarded as approximate only. No account has been taken of stragglers, sick, or troops detached on local secondary duties, etc.

## The Reserve Cavalry

**Prince Joachim Murat**

Cavalry Chief of Staff: Gen of Bde Auguste Daniel Belliard

#### Heavy Cavalry Corps:

**1st Cuirassier Division: Gen of Div Etienne Nansouty (2,987 all ranks)**

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Jean Marie DeFrance, (b) Armand la Houssaye, (c) Antoine Louis Saint-Germain  
1er to 4ème Escs des 1er et 4ème Régts de Carabiniers under (a)  
1er to 4ème Escs des 2ème et 9ème Régts de Cuirassiers under (b)  
1er to 4ème Escs des 3ème et 12ème Régts de Cuirassiers under (c)  
Divisional Horse Artillery: Part of 4ème Comp du 2ème Rég't d'Artillerie Légère  
Det of 2ème (bis) Bn du Train (2x6pdrs and 1x6in howitzer) = 3 guns.

**2nd Cuirassier Division: Gen of Div Jean d'Hautpoul (1,927 all ranks)**

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Jean Verdier, (b) Raymond Saint-Sulpice  
1er to 4ème Escs des 1er et 5ème Régts de Cuirassiers under (a)  
1er to 4ème Escs des 10ème Régts de Cuirassiers under (b)  
Divisional Horse Artillery: Part of 4ème Comp du 2ème Rég't d'Artillerie Légère  
Det of 5ème (bis) Bn du Train (2x6pdrs and 1x6in howitzer) = 3 guns.

#### Corps Artillery Reserve and Park:

3ème Comp du 6ème Rég't d'Artillerie à Pied  
Part of 6ème Comp du 2ème Rég't d'Artillerie Légère (en route)  
Det of 4ème Comp d'Artisans d'Artillerie, Det of 2ème (bis) Bn du Train  
Det of 8ème (bis) Bn du Train; 7ème Comp du 2ème Bn de Pontonniers  
(4x8pdrs, 2x6pdrs and 2x6in howitzers) = 8 guns.

#### Corps of Dragoons:

**1st Division of Dragoons: Gen of Div Dominique Klein (2,401 all ranks)**

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Jean Fenerol, (b) Auguste La Motte, (c) Joseph Picard  
1er to 3ème Escs des 1er et 2ème Régts de Dragons under (a)  
1er to 4ème Escs des 4ème et 14ème Régts de Dragons under (b)  
1er to 3ème Escs des 20ème et 26ème Régts de Dragons under (c)  
Divisional Horse Artillery: Part of 2ème Comp du 2ème Rég't d'Artillerie Légère  
Det of 2ème (bis) Bn du Train (2x8pdrs and 1x6in howitzer) = 3 guns.

**2nd Division of Dragoons: Gen of Div Emmanuel Grouchy (2,915 all ranks)**

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Mansuy Roget, (b) Jacques Milot, (c) André Boussart  
1er to 3ème Escs des 3ème et 4ème Régts de Dragons under (a)  
1er to 3ème Escs des 10ème et 11ème Régts de Dragons under (b)  
1er to 3ème Escs des 13ème et 22ème Régts de Dragons under (c)  
Divisional Horse Artillery: Part of 2ème Comp du 2ème Rég't d'Artillerie Légère  
Det of 2ème Bn du Train (2x8pdrs and 1x6in howitzer) = 3 guns.

**3rd Division of Dragoons: Gen of Div Louis Beaumont (3,055 all ranks)**

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Charles Boyé, (b) Frédéric Manzy, (c) Marie Latour-Maubourg  
1er to 5ème Escs des 5ème et 8ème Régts de Dragons under (a)  
1er to 4ème Escs des 12ème et 16ème Régts de Dragons under (b)  
1er to 4ème Escs des 9ème et 21ème Régts de Dragons under (c)  
Divisional Horse Artillery: Part of 3ème Comp du 2ème Rég't d'Artillerie Légère  
Det of 2ème Bn du Train (2x8pdrs and 1x6in howitzer) = 3 guns.

**4th Division of Dragoons: Gen of Div Louis Sahut (6,129 all ranks)**

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) Pierre Margaron, (b) Jean Laplanche, (c) unrecorded  
1er to 3ème Escs des 17ème et 27ème Régts de Dragons under (a)  
1er to 18ème Escs des 18ème et 19ème Régts de Dragons under (b)  
1er to 15ème Escs des 15ème et 25ème Régts de Dragons under (c)  
Divisional Horse Artillery: Part of 4ème Comp du 6ème Rég't d'Artillerie Légère  
Det of 2ème Bn du Train (2x8pdrs and 1x6in howitzer) = 3 guns.

**Light Cavalry Division: Gen of Div Antoine Lasalle (2,212 all ranks)**

Brigades: Gens of Bde (a) A. Lasalle, (b) Edouard Milhaud  
1er to 3ème Escs des 5ème et 7ème Régts des Hussards under (a)  
1er to 3ème Escs des 13ème Rég't de Chasseurs à Cheval under (b)  
1er to 3ème Escs des 1er Rég't des Hussards under (b)

Reserve Cavalry strength at Jena: 132 Sqns, approximately 19,629 horsemen (including 943 artillery and train troops), 26 guns & 152 vehicles



fire) or, even better, in the process of reforming into line, the French columns would deploy at 100 yards, pour in several volleys, and charge with the bayonet. Attacks of this nature would be repeated as necessary, but once the enemy's cohesion began to break it would be the turn of the corps light cavalry to spur forward in order to exploit the local success. Similar attacks would be being made by neighbouring corps, and once the enemy had been properly 'prepared' the French reserves would gain victory by a hammer blow against the selected sector. The overall secret of success was clearly inter-arm co-operation and careful orchestration of events. But, obviously, no two battles were the same.

### The Prussian and Saxon Armies of 1806

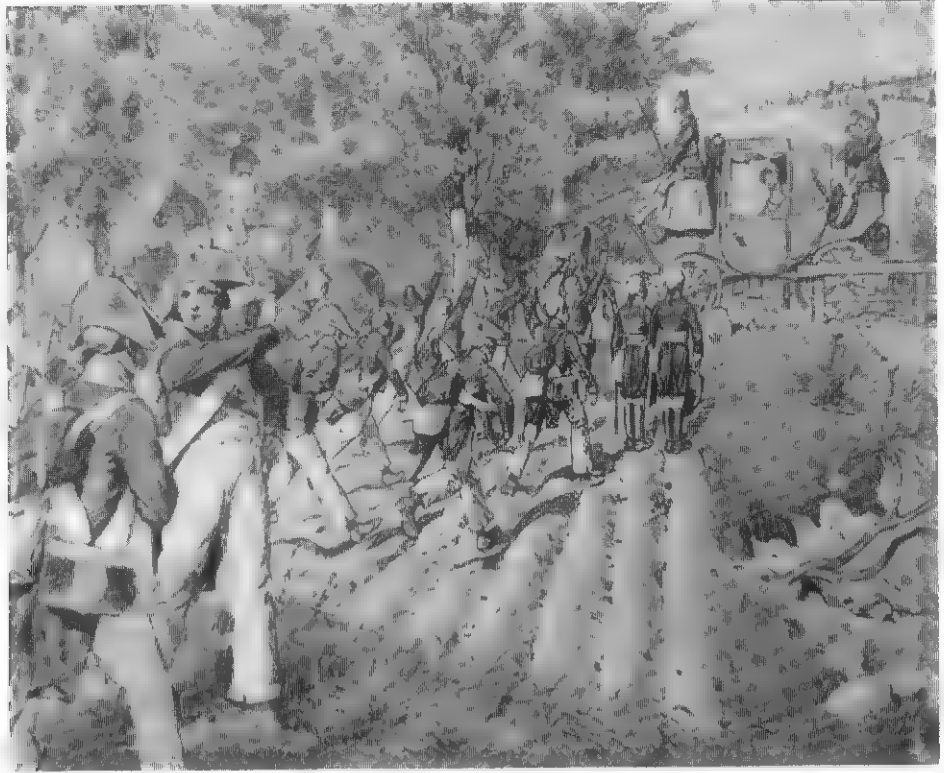
According to its establishment figures, the Prussian Army of 1806 could place some 121,000 infantry, 35,000 cavalry and 550 cannon (manned by 15,000 artillerymen) into field formations. At least 83,000 more troops and many more guns were deployed in garrisons and reserves. The bulk of the recruits were native Prussians. There was also a substantial number of non-Prussian volunteers in the army. In addition, about 20,000 Saxon troops were forcibly incorporated into the army at the outset of the campaign.

The ghost of Frederick the Great – 'Old Fritz' – stalked the ranks, and the army's undoubtedly high morale stemmed from memories of his fine achievements against long odds during the Seven Years War (1756-1763). But, as the Prussian soldier-philosopher Carl von Clausewitz wrote, 'behind the fine façade all was mildewed'. As one of the post-Jena army reformers his view was probably jaundiced and it is going too far to accept General J C F Fuller's verdict that the army was '... a museum piece'. A body of respected scholarship indicates that the Prussian soldiers fought well enough. The main weaknesses indubitably lay at the levels of command and control,

◀ French trooper of Grenadiers à Cheval (nicknamed *les grosses bottes* or 'Big Boots') in

service uniform of 1806. Illustration by Angus McBride.

► *Prussian Infantry of a Line Regiment, by Knötel. Note the pack, breadbag and cartridge-case. (P. J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*



a general inexperience of modern warfare, while the presence of unwillingly co-opted Saxon troops proved a further complication. Although Napoleon's Grand Army also contained a few German and Italian units, these were far better integrated. Prussian baggage-trains were not as large as has often been stated. The myth has grown from the chaotic conditions of their retreat after Jena-Auerstädt, when numbers of columns of vehicles converged – and from the almost equal chaos caused by 'order and counter-order' before the campaign opened and during its first days. Certainly Napoleon did not make the mistake of underestimating his opponents' potential, although through a combination of flexibility and speed he was to make short work of them in the *blitzkrieg* of 1806.

For every four long-service Prussian soldiers in 1806 there were up to seven native recruits. The same was true of the incorporated Saxons. Unfortunately in peacetime there was scant provision for Prussian units to exercise together, and the brigades and divisions formed in time of war were essentially *ad hoc* formations which their commanders had little or no time to get to know or

train. There were no *corps d'armée* on the French pattern, but the divisions were mixed, containing elements of all arms. However the grave mistake was made of not organizing army reserves of artillery and cavalry. Everything was 'in the shop-window'.

The Prussian infantry comprised three main types: musketeers, grenadiers and fusiliers. A line regiment consisted of two battalions of musketeers and two companies of grenadiers. These regiments were named after their colonels-in-chief and numbered according to their seniority. In time of war, the grenadier companies of an infantry regiment were combined with those of another regiment to form a battalion, which was known by the name of its field commander. Each musketeer battalion consisted of five companies, each of two platoons, while the grenadier battalions consisted of four companies, a total of eight platoons. Fusiliers, a light infantry formation, were formed into brigades of three battalions in peacetime. In the event of war, the battalions were allocated to larger formations on an individual basis. They were known by the names of their field commanders.



# ORDER OF BATTLE PRUSSIAN ARMY AND SAXON ALLIES

## HIGH COMMAND

Commander-in-Chief (nominal): King Frederick-William III

Second-in-command: General Charles William Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick

Chief of Staff: Colonel Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst (and see 3rd Div)

ARMY NEAR JENA: General Friedrich Ludwig, Fürst von Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen

Chief of Staff: Colonel Rudolf Massenbach

### Advance Guard Division

Generalleutnant Prince Louis Ferdinand

- killed in action at Saalfeld, 10 October (5,300 all ranks)

Light Troops: Generalmajor von Schimmelmann

Light Infantry Brigade: Generalmajor von Pelet

Fusilier Bns von Pelet, Ruhle and Rabenau

Jäger Companies Valentin and Masars

Attached Artillery: 6pdr Foot Battery Reimann (6x6pdrs)

Cavalry Brigade: Generalmajor von Schimmelmann

Ten Sqs of the Schimmelmann Hussar Regt No. 6

Attached Artillery: Gause's Horse Artillery Battery No. 2 (8x6pdrs)

Cavalry Brigade: Generalmajor von Trützschler

Eight Sqs of the Saxon Hussar Regt

Saxon Infantry Brigade: Generalmajor von Belvaqua

Two Bns of the Müffling Musketeer Regt No. 49 (Prussian)

Two Bns of the Prince Clemens Infantry Regt\* (Saxon)

Two Bns of the Kurfürst Infantry Regt\*

Attached Artillery: 4pdr Foot Battery Hoyer\* (6x4pdrs)

Approximate strength at Jena on 14 October 1806: 9 Bns & 18 Sqs = 5,300 men (including 3,000 light cavalry & 250 gunners) & 20 cannon.

### Left Wing

2nd Division: Grand-Duke von Zechwitz\* (9,200 all ranks)

Brigades: Generalmajor (a) von Burgsdorff\*, (b) von Dyhern\*

Two Bns each of the Thummel and Prince Xavier Infantry Regts under (a)

Attached Artillery: Haussmar\* and Ernst\* 12pdr Heavy Batteries (16 pieces)

Two Bns each of the Low & Niesemeuschel Infantry Regts under (b)

2nd Bn of the Belvaqua Infantry Regt also under (b)

Attached Artillery: The Bonriot 12pdr Battery (10 pieces)

Attached Cavalry: Generalmajor von Kochinsky\*

Four Sqs each of Mounted Carabinier Kochisty Cuirassier Regts

Four Sqs of the Prince Albert Chevauleger Regt\*

Attached Artillery: The Grossmann Horse Artillery Battery (10 pieces)

Attached Light Troops: Generalleutnant von Polenz\*

The Boguslawsky Fusilier Battalion

Four Sqs of the Polenz Chevauleger Regt\*

Part of the Studnitz (14th) Horse Artillery Battery (5 pieces)

Approximate strength at Jena on 14 October 1806: 21 Bns & 28 Sqs = 9,200 men (including 4,000 cavalry & 300 gunners) & 41 cannon.

(\* denotes Saxons)

### Right Wing

1st Division: Generalleutnant von Grawert (7,500 all ranks)

(also assumed command of Advance Guard Division from 10 October)

Brigades: Generalmajor (a) von Müffling, (b) von Schinsky

Grenadier Bn Hahn No. 29/32 under (a), together with

Two Bns each of the Hohenlohe No. 32 & Sanitz No. 50 Musketeer Regts

Attached Artillery: Glasenapp 12pdr Foot Battery No. 7 (6x12pdrs)

Grenadier Bn Sack No. 33/47 under (b), together with

Two Bns each of the Zastrow No. 39 & Grawert No. 37 Musketeer Regts

Attached Artillery: Wolframsdorf 12pdr Foot Battery No. 8 (6x12pdrs)

Attached Cavalry: Generalleutnant von Holtzendorf\*

Brigade: Generalmajor Henkel

Five Sqs each of the Holtzendorf No. 9 & Henkel No. 1 Cuirassier Regts

Five Squadrons of the Kraft Dragoon Regt No. 11

Attached Artillery: Steirwehr Horse Artillery Battery No. 9 (6x6pdrs)

Attached Light Cavalry and Light Infantry: Oberst (Colonel) von Erichsen

Fusilier Bn Erichsen No. 10 & ten Sqs of the Gettkandt Hussar Regt No. 1

Attached Artillery: half of von Studnitz Horse Artillery Batt No. 14 (4x4pdrs)

Approximate strength at Jena on 14 October 1806: 17 Bns & 33 Sqs = 9,700 men (including 1,900 cavalry, 230 gunners) & 22 cannon.

### Left Flank Corps

Generalmajor Boleslas Friedrich von Taubentzen (7,960 all ranks)

Brigades: Generalmajor (a) von Zweiffel, (b) von Schöneberg\*

Part of the Herwarth (45th) Grenadier Bn under (a)

Two Bns of the Zweiffel (46th) Musketeer Regt under (a)

Two Bns (each) of the Rechten & Pr Maximilian Infantry Regts\* under (b)

The Winkel Grenadier Bn under (b)

Attached Artillery: The Kotsch Howitzer Battery (6 pieces)

Attached Light Troops:

The Werner and Kronheim Jäger Coys

The Rosen Bn of Fusiliers

Four Sqs of the Prince Clement Chevauleger Regt\*

Five Sqs of the Bila Hussar Regt

Approximate strength at Jena on 14 October 1806: 10 Bns & 8 Sqs = 6,300 men (including 1,800 cavalry and 70 gunners) & 6 howitzers

Approximate total strength of Prince Hohenlohe's Prussian-Saxon Army at Jena on 14 October 1806: 39,260 men (including 7,280 cavalry) and 112 cannon (NB to which were added during the afternoon of the 14th the reinforcements under General Rüchel listed below)

### The Reserve (Grenadier) Division

Generalleutnant von Prittwitz (7,100 all ranks)

Brigades: (a) von Prittwitz in person, (b) Generalmajor von Cernin\*

The von Loshin (38th/49th) & Dohna (40th/43rd) Grenadier Bns under (a)

The Borck (28th/50th) & (part) Kolln (39th) Grenadier Bns also under (a)

Attached Artillery: The Schützenburg 12pdr Foot Battery (8 pieces)

The Tholaz, Le Coq, Lichtenhayr, Metzsch & Hundt Grenadier Bns under (b)

Attached Artillery: The Tullmar Artillery Battery (8 pieces)

Attached Cavalry: Generalmajor von Kraft

Five Sqs of the Prittwitz (32nd) Dragoon Regt

Four (Saxon) Sqs of the Prince John Chevauleger Regt\*

Attached Artillery: The Hann Battery of Horse Artillery (7 pieces)

Approximate strength at Jena on 14 October 1806: 9 Bns & 9 Sqs = 7,100 men (including 2,000 cavalry and 165 gunners) & 23 cannon.

NB Individuals and units marked \* indicate Saxon commanders and troops

Continued overleaf

**MAIN ARMY NEAR AUERSTADT: King Frederick-William III and Charles William Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick**  
 Chief of Staff: Colonel Scharnhorst (in fact on detached duty commanding 3rd Division)

**Advance Guard Division**

**Generalmajor Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher**  
 (transferred on 14 October to Generalmajor von Oswald for the retreat, when it became the Rearguard Division) (7,500 all ranks)

**Light Troops: Generalmajor von Oswald**

Light Infantry Brigade.  
 Fusilier Bns of Weimar, Koch, Oswald and Greiffenberg  
 Attached Artillery: regimental artillery only (6 pieces)  
 Cavalry Brigade: Generalmajor von Blücher  
 Ten Sqs each of the Württemberg & Blücher Hussars  
 Five Sqs of the Irwing Dragoon Regiment  
 Attached Artillery: Schorlemmer's Battery of Horse Artillery (8 guns)

Approximate strength at Auerstadt on 14 October 1806: 4 Bns & 25 Sqs = 7,500 men (including 5,000 cavalry & 150 gunners) & 14 cannon

**Centre**

**2nd Division: Gen von Wartensleben** (10,500 all ranks)

Brigades: (a) Gen von Wede, (b) Gen von Renoard  
 Grenadier Bn Hanstein under (a)  
 Two Bns of the Renoard & Kleist Regts under (a)  
 Attached Artillery: 8pdr Foot Battery Wilks (6 guns)  
 Grenadier Bn Alt-Braun under (b)  
 Two Bns each of the Brunswick-Lüneburg & Prince Louis Ferdinand Regts under (b)  
 Attached Artillery: 8pdr Foot Battery Lange (6 guns)  
 Attached Cavalry: Gen von Outzow  
 Five Sqs each of the Quitzow & Retzenstein Cuirassier Regts  
 Attached Artillery: The Merkatz Horse Artillery Battery (6x4pdr guns)

Approximate strength at Auerstadt on 14 October 1806: 10 Bns & 10 Sqs = 10,500 men (including 2,000 cavalry & 200 gunners) & 18 cannon.

**Left Wing**

**3rd Division: Col von Scharnhorst** (vice Gen von Schmettau) (13,000 all ranks)

Brigades: (a) Gen von Alvensleben, (b) Gen von Schmonsky  
 Grenadier Bn Schack  
 Two Bns of the Prince Henry & the Alvensleben Regts under (a)  
 Attached Artillery: 8pdr Foot Battery Röhl (6 cannon)  
 Grenadier Bn Kraft under (b)  
 Two Bns each of the Malschitsky & Schmonski Regts under (b)  
 Attached Artillery: 8pdr Foot Battery Stankar (6 cannon)  
 Attached Cavalry: (a) Gen von Irwing, (b) Gen von Bunting  
 Ten Sqs of the Queen's Dragoons under (a)  
 Attached Artillery: Horse Artillery Battery Graumann (6 guns)  
 Five Sqs each of the Heising & Bunting Cuirassier Regts under (b)

Approximate strength at Auerstadt on 14 October 1806: 10 Bns & 20 Sqs = 13,000 men (including 4,000 cavalry & 200 gunners) & 18 guns.

**Right Wing**

**1st Division: Gen Wm Frederick, Prince of Orange** (9,500 all ranks)

Brigades: (a) Prince Henry, (b) Col von Lützow  
 Grenadier Bn Rheinbaben under (a)  
 Two Bns of the Prince Ferdinand & Puttkammer Regts under (a)  
 Attached Artillery: 6pdr Foot Battery Riemer (6 guns)  
 Grenadier Bn Knebel under (b)  
 Two Bns of the Moendorff & Wartensleben Regts under (b)  
 Attached Artillery: 6pdr Foot Battery Lehmann (6 guns)  
 Attached Cavalry: Lt Col Prince Henry of Prussia  
 Five Sqs each of the Life Guard Regt & the Carabiniers  
 Attached Artillery: The Horse Artillery Batt Wilmann (6x4pdr guns)

Approximate strength at Auerstadt on 14 October 1806: 11 Bns & 15 Sqs = 9,500 men (including 2,000 cavalry & 200 gunners) & 18 cannon.

**Reserve Corps**

**Corps Commander: Gen Count von Kalkreuth**

**1st Reserve Division: Gen von Kuhnheim** (7,400 all ranks)

Brigades: (a) Col von Pletzt, (b) Gen von Hirschfeld  
 Grenadier Bns Rabel & Prince Augustus under (a)  
 Two Bns of the King's Regt under (a)  
 Attached Artillery: The Alker Howitzer Battery (6x6in howitzers)  
 Guard Grenadier Bn under (b)  
 L'eguard Bn under (b)  
 Two Bns of the Guard Regt under (b)  
 Attached Artillery: 8pdr Foot Battery Faber (3 guns)  
 Attached Cavalry:  
 Five Sqs each of the Garde du Corps & the Gendarmes  
 Five Sqs of the Beeren Cuirassiers  
 Attached Artillery: The Scholten Horse Artillery Battery (6x4pdrs)

**2nd Reserve Division: Gen von Arnim** (8,800 all ranks)

Brigades: (a) Gen von Malschitzky, (b) Gen von Zenge  
 Grenadier Bns of Schlieffen & Hülsen under (a)  
 Two Bns of the Zenge Regt under (a)  
 Attached Artillery: 8pdr Foot Artillery Batt von Bychelberg (8 guns)  
 Grenadier Bns Gaudy & Osten under (b)  
 Two Bns each of the Arnim & Pösch Regts  
 Attached Artillery: 8pdr Foot Artillery Battery Heiden (8 guns)  
 (no Attached Cavalry)

Approximate strength at Auerstadt on 14 October 1806: 18 Bns & 30 Sqs = 16,200 (including 3,000 cavalry & 200 gunners) & 31 guns

**ARMY TRAINS AND ARTILLERY PARKS**

Approximate strength on 14 October 1806 in the vicinity of Auerstadt and between that town and Apolda to the south-east (NB many did not actually engage): 11 batteries of foot and horse artillery (some 64 guns and howitzers) artillerymen, train personnel and escorts: 4,900 men

Approximate total strength of the Main Prussian Army at Auerstadt on 14 October 1806: 63,000 present (including staff attendants and escorts) of whom some 50,000 were combatants (including 9,600 cavalry) and 163 cannon. NB No accounts taken here of Württemberg's General Reserve at Halle (18 Bns & 20 Sqs = 15,000 men)

**Sources**

O von Lottow-Vorbeck,  
*Der Krieg von 1806 und 1807* (Berlin 1891) Vol VI, pp 425-7  
 D. Reichel, *Davout et l'Art de la Guerre* (Neuchâtel 1975), pp 332-3  
 and information kindly provided by Cor G. Nafziger and M. Grayer, Esq

The author would also like to thank Peter Hofschroer for checking the spelling of German names - both people and places. One suggestion he has not implemented, however. Although the modern spelling is 'Auerstedt', he has retained the traditional form of 'Auerstadt' throughout the volume

**DETACHED CORPS (OR ARMY): General Ernst Philip von Rüchel**  
(exclusive of General Blücher's cavalry - detached to the main army)

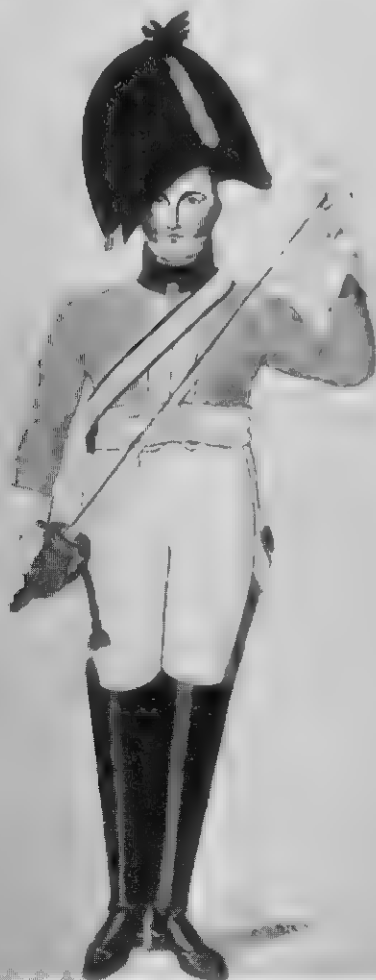
**Advanced Guard**

**Generalleutnant von Winning** (5,000 all ranks)  
 Brigades (a) von Winning in person, (b) Generalmajor von Wobeser  
 Two Bns of the Tschammer (27th) Infantry Regt under (a)  
 The Kaeserling (1st) Fusilier & Bila (2nd) Fusilier Bns &  
 Two Jäger Companies under (a)  
 Five Sqns each of the Plotz (3rd) & Kohler (7th) Hussar Regts under (a)  
 Attached Artillery: the 19th 6pdr Foot Battery &  
 von Neander's 12th Battery of Horse Artillery (between them 16 guns)  
 The Ernst Fusilier (9th) Bn & One Jäger Company under (b)  
 Five Sqns of the Wobeser (14th) Dragoon Regt under (b)  
 Attached Artillery: part of the von Lehmann (4th) 4pdr Batt of Horse Artillery (4 guns).

**Corps de Bataille (a Division)**

**Duke of Weimar** (10,000 all ranks)  
 1st Brigade:  
 Two Bns of the von Schenk (9th) & von Winning Infantry Regts  
 Two Bns of the von Winning (23rd) Infantry Regt  
 The Borstell (9th/44th) Grenadier Bn  
 2nd Brigade:  
 Two Bns of the Treuenfels (29th) & Strachwitz (43rd) Infantry Regts  
 The Hellman (9th/44th) Grenadier Bn  
 3rd Brigade:  
 Two Bns of the Vedell (10th), the Strachwitz (43rd) & Tschape (37th) Infantry Regts & One Bn of The Sobbe (18th) Fusilier Bn  
 Attached Cavalry  
 Five Sqns of the Baillodsz Cuirassier Regt  
 Five Sqns of the von Katte (4th) Dragoon Regt  
 Attached Artillery:  
 The Kirchfeld (16th) & Schaefer (17th) Foot Batteries (16 guns)  
 The 11th Battery of Horse Artillery (4 guns)

Approximate strength of General Rüchel's Detached Corps in Jena area on the afternoon of 14 October 1806. 21 Bns & 25 Sqns = 15,000 men (including 2,300 cavalry & 450 gunners) & 40 cannon (8 in action)



A grenadier battalion had an establishment of 18 officers, 56 NCOs, 1 artillery NCO (for the battalion gun), four surgeons, twelve drummers, 1 bugler (for the Schützen), eight fifers, 17 gunners, 40 *Schützen*, 600 grenadiers, 40 reserves and eight sappers, a total of 805 men. A musketeer battalion had an establishment of 22 to 23 officers, 60 NCOs, 1 artillery NCO, 5 surgeons, 15 drummers, 1 bugler, 17 gunners, 50 *Schützen*, 600 musketeers, 50 reserves and 10 sappers, a total of 831 to 832 men. In addition, the 1st battalion of a regiment had 6 oboe players. A fusilier battalion had an establishment of 19 officers, 48 NCOs, 4 surgeons, 5 drummers, 8 buglers, 40 *Schützen*, 520 fusiliers, 40 reserves and 8 sappers, a total of 692 men.

The Foot *Jäger* regiment consisted of ten companies with an establishment of 51 officers, 120 NCOs, 36 buglers and 1,800 privates. Like the fusilier battalions, the rifle-armed companies of this élite formation tended to be allocated to other formations and were known by the names of

◀ A heavy cavalryman of the Prussian 2nd Regiment of Cuirassiers: by Henschel. Each cuirassier regiment had five squadrons, and, unlike the practice in the

French Army, were not kept in a Reserve Cavalry role – being deployed at wing and divisional levels. (P. J. Haythornthwaite Collection)

*Prussian light infantry of 1806. Left: an officer; centre: a private soldier; right: a non-*

*commissioned officer – of the Graf Wedel Fusilier Battalion. Illustration by Bryan Fosten.*



their field commanders. The *Jäger* were recruited in part from huntsmen and gamekeepers, who often brought their own rifles with them; thus there was a lack of conformity in the armament of this formation. The *Schützen* were selected soldiers and marksmen, armed with 18.5mm calibre rifles; they enjoyed NCO status and were used as

skirmishers for the units to which they were attached.

Prussian tactics were not so outdated in 1806 as was once thought. The line regiments were trained to deliver volleys, platoon firing against cavalry, and 'battle-fire' (by which the third rank held its fire, while the first two delivered volleys in



turn before switching to fire-at-will) – particularly useful in defensive engagements. In the attack, they often adopted the famous ‘oblique order’ formation. But, unlike the French, the co-ordination in action of light infantry with line formations left much to be desired at this time.

Saxon regiments held two grenadier and eight musketeer companies – 40 officers, 130 NCOs, 30 drummers, 20 fifiers, 20 sappers and 1,500 rank and file (of whom 300 were grenadiers). In wartime the four grenadier companies of two regiments often amalgamated into a battalion.

Passing on to consider the Prussian cavalry, the best-mounted in Europe thanks to the East Prussian horse studs, we find the standard three types: heavy, dragoon and light. The bicorne-hatted cuirassiers no longer wore body-armour.

The aristocratic *Garde du Corps* was, with the *Gendarmes*, the élite heavy formation. With five squadrons apiece, they mounted 779 and 845 officers and men respectively. The eleven cuirassier regiments also had five squadrons, with 31 officers, 75 NCOs, fifteen trumpeters and 720 other ranks. The fourteen dragoon regiments (five squadrons each in all but two élite instances) totalled 841 officers and men apiece. The nine regiments of hussars had ten squadrons apiece (45 officers, 178 NCOs, 28 trumpeters and 1,320 troopers). An exception was the Hussar Battalion *Bila*, with five squadrons and an establishment of 771 officers and men. All cavalymen carried swords or sabres, pistols and a carbine apiece. One unit – the five squadrons of *Towarczys*, 626 men in all – wielded lances.



▲Uniform of the Prussian Rudorff Hussar Regiment, by Gemche. (Author's Collection)



▲Uniform of Grenadier Under-Officer of the Reinbaben Battalion of the Prussian Larich

Regiment, by Gemche. (Author's Collection)

► *Prussian Light infantry Jaegers in action, by Knötel. Green-coated light infantrymen are depicted in deployed formations so as to cover the front of the infantry line battalion in rear. (P.J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*



The fighting reputation of Prussian cavalry was formidable. Each squadron formed up in two lines 48 files wide, any extra men forming a reserve third line; they were trained to charge in staggered waves, with columns of hussars on each flank of the attack ready to exploit success. When attacking retiring infantry formed in squares, flankers (cavalry in loose order) were used to draw the enemy's fire before the main squadrons assailed the corners of the squares. Reconnaissance, exploitation and pursuit were the main tasks of the hussars, supplemented by dragoons.

The Saxon heavy cavalry regiments had four squadrons, each divided into two companies (or troops), with a total establishment of some 730 officers and men. A Saxon hussar regiment was organized into eight squadrons and comprised a staff of seventeen and a strength of 1,020 all ranks. Saxon cavalry was widely regarded as excellent in battle.

The Prussian artillery was organized into 12pdr batteries (each with six cannon and a pair of 10pdr howitzers attached), 6pdr horse artillery batteries (each with six guns and two 7pdr howitzers); and so-called 'Reserve' batteries (with twelve 6pdr guns each) which were often distrib-

uted as regimental artillery among the infantry battalions. The Saxon artillery present on 14 October 1806 comprised 40 guns and six howitzers: one battery of six 12pdrs with two additional 8pdr howitzers, two batteries of six 8pdrs (with a pair of 8pdr howitzers each), one battery of horse artillery equipped with six 4pdrs, and two batteries with six 4pdr 'grenade pieces' and two 4pdr cannon apiece. Artillery tactics were based on close support of infantry. All guns were either in batteries deployed at brigade and divisional levels or (the lighter pieces) attached to regiments. There was no idea of forming massed batteries, and the absence of any army artillery reserve was a distinct deficiency, as was soon to be learnt to the Prussian Army's cost.

The Prussian Army of this date did not possess a staff organization worthy of the name – and therein lay its greatest weakness. There were three rival chiefs of staff (already mentioned above) below whom the *Ober Kriegs Collegium* attempted to carry out some staff functions but was in fact more akin to an inspectorate. The divisional staffs were haphazardly organized, and senior generals often had to brief their regimental colonels in person. Here lay the seeds of impending disaster.



◀ **French Hussars of Napoleon's Grand Army.** Left: a lieutenant of the 1st Hussars in service dress. Right: a trooper of the same regiment in field uniform. Both uniforms are as worn in 1806. Illustrations by Angus McBride.

# THE BATTLE OF JENA

As the two engagements were fought at very much the same time, on 14 October 1806, they will be treated separately here for the sake of clarity. However, as will become apparent their operational effect upon each other was marked. Napoleon believed he had been fighting the main Prussian Army all day, and knew nothing about what had happened at Auerstädt about 15 kilometres away until the late afternoon. Returning to his quarters at 4.30 p.m., he found the battle- and travel-stained Colonel Falcon, an aide-de-camp of Marshal Davout's, awaiting him. At first he could not believe the news he brought – particularly the estimate of Prussian numbers. 'Your Marshal must have been seeing double!' he ungraciously snapped at the emissary – a reference to Davout's poor eyesight. But once the news had sunk in the Emperor paid all due recognition to the victors of one of the most incredible battles of the 19th century or any other.

## The Battle Opens at Jena

The night was cold and very foggy. The Emperor conducted one last forward reconnaissance with General Suchet before snatching a few hours' rest from 3 a.m. He knew that 25,000 men and 42 cannon were in the Landgrafenberg area – and that the risks of a premature Prussian onslaught (which the French would have been hard-pressed to survive with a large river behind them, although all French *corps d'armée* were designed to have a 24-hour resistance capacity) were slight. The forward sentinels were within 20 yards of their Prussian counterparts at some places, but Hohenlohe, with scant idea of enemy numbers to his front, had decided not to take the initiative.

As Napoleon slept, his orders were distributed by Berthier's staff. As early as 10.30 p.m. three messengers had ridden off northwards into the

night, bearing a vital message to Davout ordering III Corps – and I Corps if still in contact – to strike west from the Naumburg area towards Apolda in a classical envelopment move, severing the Prussian line of retreat. Soon messages – all in duplicate – were en route for Ney, Soult, Murat and Angereau. Ney's VI Corps was to reinforce Lannes and the Guard in the centre; Soult's IV Corps was to come up to form the right flank by way of Löbstedt to the north of Jena, while Augereau's VII Corps was to provide the left flank by way of the winding Schnecke Pass, passing Lützeroda village to the west; Prince Murat was to hasten up with his light cavalry, to be joined as soon as possible by his cuirassier division, to form – alongside the Imperial Guard – the central reserve. All these formations were on the road, so much would depend on the time they actually arrived. After all, the Emperor was about to give battle two days earlier and some 30 kilometres further east than he had originally conceived. The flexibility of the French operational system was about to be strongly tested in more ways than one.

The battlefield of Jena covers a rectangular area of some 42 square kilometres. The eastern boundary is formed by the River Saale, about 100 feet wide, and stretches about six kilometres from beyond Löbstedt in the north to the southern outskirts of Jena with its single bridge over the river. Overlooking the town are a number of heights, including the Landgrafenberg, which rises from a base of 200 metres to the peak of the Windknollen feature which stands at 361 metres – a steep rise of almost 500 feet. The hills are in the main closely forested. The plateau to which they lead is comparatively open ground. The Windknollen feature (today without its windmill although one still stood on the spot in 1906) overlooks a broad plain stretching away to the north-west. This is largely open, only rolling in the





northern sector delimited by the Gönnerbach running into the Saale, interspersed with occasional woods and copses. At that season of the year there were no standing crops.

Three lines of villages concern our story, each in turn running approximately north-east to south-west, at different distances from the Windknollen which faces them. Immediately below the French-held height these were (from right – or NE – to left – or SW – in each case): Rödigen, Closewitz, Lützeroda and Cospeda, the last three forming a triangular group; in the second line, some two kilometres further west, come Nerkewitz, Krippendorf, vital Vierzehnheiligen and Isserstedt; and in the third line, between two and three kilometres' distant from the second, Klein Romstedt, Gross Romstedt and Kötschau. All these villages would play greater or lesser parts in the battle-drama about to unfold. The westernmost limit of the battle area was formed by the Herressener Bach (or stream). The southernmost limit was the Jena to Weimar high road, running from the Herressener Bach through parts of the forest down to Jena through the winding 'Schnecke' (or 'Snail') Pass, which for the last part of its route parallel to the Mühlbach, a minor tributary of the Saale which it joined in 1806 just short of the town of Jena. A series of country roads lined the various

▲ *View from peak of the Landgrafenberg, looking north-west. The village to the left is Lützeroda; that*

*to the right is Closewitz; the woods of Rödigen are on the right-hand horizon. (Author's photograph)*

villages. It was late autumn, so the deciduous trees were beginning to shed their leaves.

As dawn approached, a thick mist capped the Landgrafenberg. Troops moving to their positions in the fog had difficulty in discovering their neighbours, and Napoleon ordered Lannes to wait until 6.30 a.m. before commencing his advance to contact. The view was hardly clearer at that hour, but the Emperor was determined to seize the initiative; he would wait no longer. An aide galloped off into the fog; V Corps was to attack Closewitz forthwith, and win more space for the approaching French reinforcements. Lannes' chief of staff signed for the order. Bugles and trumpets blared; drums beat; hoarse orders were shouted.

Forward in extended order went Gabriel Suchet's 17ème Légère and Honoré Gazan's 21ème Légère commanded by brigade commanders Michel Claparède and Jean Graindorge respectively. Behind them, the line infantry formed up into columns, awaiting the word to advance. Suddenly a challenge was heard, a shot rang out – followed by more discharges as the Prussian



▲ **Honoré Théodore Maxime Gazan**, by Forestier. General Gazan (1765-1845) commanded V Corps' 2nd Division with distinction at Jena, where his men saw a great deal of heavy fighting around and in the village of *Vierzehnheiligen*. Gazan

had emerged to fame and recognition at the Battle of Zurich in September 1800, where he was promoted to *général de division* on the field of battle. In 1808 he was created Count of La Peyrière. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)



▲ **Louis Gabriel Suchet** by Muller. General Suchet (1770-1826) was commander of Lannes's 1st Division in V Corps. On 14 October 1806 his formation, alongside Gazan's 2nd Division, bore the brunt of the fighting against

Tauntzien's Prussians in the French centre. In later years he would be made a marshal for services in Spain (1811) and be created Duke of Albufera. (P. J. Haythornthwaite Collection)

sentinels and picquets saw figures looming out of the fog ahead of them. The sound of the firing was muffled by the fog. Then a cannon fired a warning shot – and Prince Hohenlohe's troops leapt up from their campfires to seize muskets and equipment to the strident encouragement of their sergeants. Officers swung into the saddle as their grooms led forward their mounts and hastened to their alarm posts as the muffled crackle of distant musketry increased in volume. Clearly this was no mere '*affaire des postes*' but a definite French attack.

Lannes' orders had specified the village of Closewitz as his initial objective, but the poor visibility and difficult ground caused Suchet's leading formations to veer some little way to their left (Gazan's troops covering 1st Division's westward flank conforming). So it was that the French attack struck home on the road running from Closewitz to Lützeroda, where the regiments of

Rechten and Zweifel of Bolesas von Tauntzien's command took the first impact. The din of battle now swelled into a roar as 28 French guns came into action against dimly perceived targets, and were answered by the Prussian batteries. The fight for the line of the road was intense, but in the end the French broke through and by 9 o'clock Suchet was master of most of Closewitz and a substantial part of the road to Lützeroda.

Gazan's initial fortunes against Cospeda to the west were more mixed. His first attack was repulsed, but when the local Prussians of the Cerrini Regiment tried to exploit this, they in turn were sent reeling back. Then the fog cleared, and Gazan for the first time saw the strength of his opponents. Fortunately Tauntzien had already decided to abandon the forward triangle of villages, and fall back upon his reserves near *Vierzehnheiligen*. Behind him at Klein Romstedt,

meanwhile, Prince Hohenlohe was still not convinced that he faced more than an active French flank guard. He was soon to be disillusioned.

Taumentzien now had Rosen's battalion on his extreme (somewhat refused) right, then a force of light cavalry near Lützenroda flanking a line formed by the infantry formations of Bose, Werner,

Ericksen and Bon, with Cerrini, Rechten and Zwiffel recovering from their rough-handling by Gazan. But for a while there seemed to be no

▼ *Prussian cavalry of 1806. Left to right: Sergeant-Major of Hussar Regiment No. 8; trooper, Hussar Regiment No. 7;*

*and trooper, the Rudorff Life Hussar Regiment No. 2. Illustration by Bryan Fosten.*





stopping the fire-eater Lannes who was remorselessly pushing his men northwards towards Vierzehnheiligen. They actually took the village, and much of the Dornberg feature as well. But at about 9.30 a.m. a determined counter-attack by Prussian cavalry supported by Bon and Cerrini swept the French back to the road line between Lützeroda and Closewitz, regaining both villages, and splitting the French in two into the bargain. Lannes, however, was at his best in a tactical crisis, and soon he had the foe out of Lützeroda again, while

◀ *Jean Lannes as a young man, by Kruell. Marshal Lannes (1769–1908) had played a prominent part at Austerlitz, where he commanded the Grande Armée's left wing. He was to add further lustre to his reputation at Jena, again at the head of his V Corps. Mortally wounded at Aspern-Essling in 1809, he was destined to be the first of the Marshalate to die. His loss would be greatly felt by Napoleon, who regarded Lannes as one of*

*his few true friends. (P. J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*

▼ *The Battle of Jena, print by Levachez after Duplessis-Bertaux. Napoleon and his staff (right foreground) on the northern edge of the Landgrafenberg overlook the battle in the centre as Lannes advances with V Corps and part of Murat's cavalry. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)*







▲ *Louis Vincent Joseph le Blond Saint-Hilaire (1766-1809) took the brunt of the fighting around Rödigen and its thick woods on the French right. An experienced tactician (who had played an important*

*part at Austerlitz in 1805), it was not long before he had mastered General von Hölzendorff's force. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)*

Gazan's second line under *Général de Brigade* Dominique Vedel made short work of an attempt by some Prussian units belonging to Zweiffel, Herwarth and Pelet's light infantry, expelled from the environs of Closewitz once more, to pass behind V Corps towards Kappellendorf. It was now almost 10 o'clock, and a short lull settled over the centre and western side of the battlefield.

### The Struggle for Rödigen

Meanwhile, away to the east, a conflict had sprung to life as the leading division of Marshal Soult's IV Corps, commanded by General Saint-Hilaire, clashed with Lieutenant-General von Hölzendorff's cavalry and infantry near the villages of Nerkewitz and Rödigen and the nearby densely wooded hills comprising the extreme left of the Prussian overall position. Saint-Hilaire's men had a hard slog as they pressed uphill from Löbstedt

and Zwätzen in the Saale valley just north of Jena, and Soult ordered a short halt to allow them to reorder their formations and to permit the corps artillery to catch up with the main body.

The French soon found themselves coming under fire from the woods, but their *tirailleurs* proved markedly superior to the less experienced Prussian light infantry detachments, and by 8.15 a.m. IV Corps' leading elements, supervised by Soult in person, were masters of Closewitz, forcing the regiments and hussar detachments of Valentini, Pelet, Hundt and Metsch, and then Zwiffel, to give ground towards the north and west. But as Saint-Hilaire's panting but jubilant men approached the hamlet of Rödigen, the French met an unpleasant surprise. For von Hölzendorff, marching towards the firing from the hills above Dornburg (where he had originally been stationed with a mixed force to watch the bridge over the Saale), suddenly clashed with Saint-Hilaire's open flank. The Prussian commander – correctly assessing the French strength to his front – decided to pull back his main force and 12pdr battery towards Nerkewitz so as to permit his main body, still largely hidden amidst the trees, to make a clean break. At 10 a.m., therefore, half Hölzendorff's infantry, with support from cavalry and light troops, suddenly debouched from the trees in echelon of battalions, left flank refused (or set back a trifle). Leading with his right, he marched boldly forward. It was an attack of which even the critical Frederick the Great would have approved. But in Saint-Hilaire – and the superior French light infantry – he met his tactical match. Judging his timing to perfection, the French commander launched a swarm of light infantry from dead ground against Hölzendorff's flank. Their sharpshooting proved too much for the valiant Hölzendorff, and he ordered his men to retreat. In amongst them, scattering their uhlans and light infantry detachments, spurred Soult's light cavalry brigade to catch and decimate one of the retiring Prussian columns. In the resultant mêlée the Prussians lost two colours, half-a-dozen regimental cannon, and all of 400 prisoners of war.

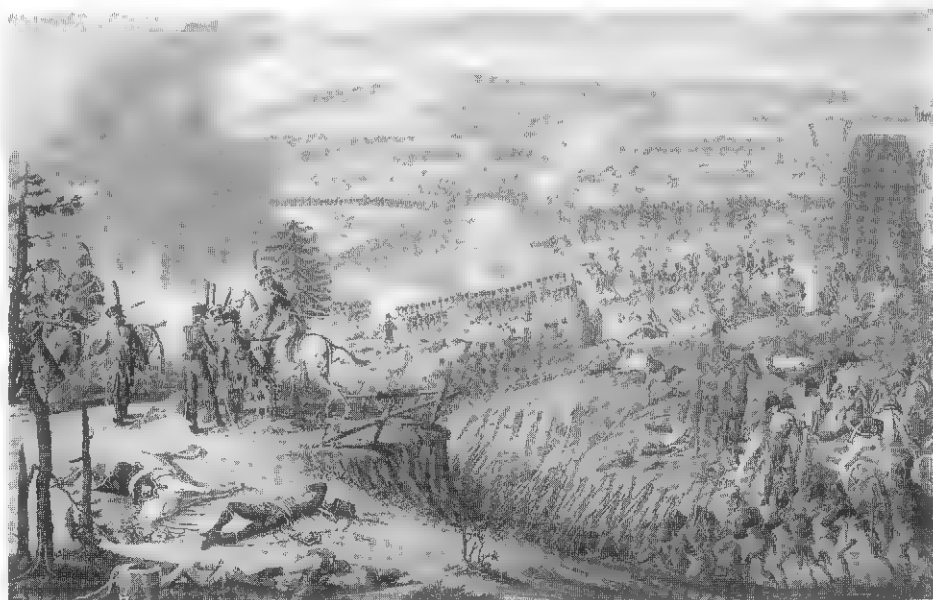
Hölzendorff strove to rally his men around Nerkewitz, but Saint-Hilaire never allowed the Prussians to regain their composure after the

rough handling they had undergone. Once again the French light infantry were everywhere, working their way around the Prussian left flank, their success being clinched by a well-pressed cavalry charge against the Prussian centre. This was too much for the Prussians – who forthwith retreated in some disarray northwards in the general direction of distant Apolda, losing most of their guns in the process. Their general, however, managed to rally one battery of guns and what was left of his horsemen and sent them off to join Hohenlohe near Klein Romstedt. The dutiful Prussian commander then set off to rejoin his infantry, who were still falling back in reasonably good order, and proceeded to rally them as well. Effectively, however, Hölzendorff's men took little real part in the remainder of the battle. Indeed, his command was only saved from probable destruction by dramatic new developments elsewhere on the battlefield, which compelled Soult to turn Saint-Hilaire's full attention to the south-west. Soon after 10.15 a.m. his division was en route for Krippendorf, threatening the left flank of Hohenlohe's centre.

### The Blunders of Marshal Ney

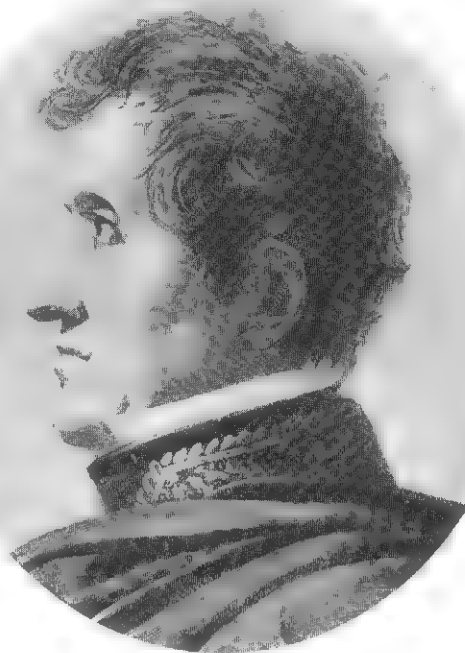
Marshal Michel Ney had a great reputation throughout the French Army as a fire-eater – more celebrated, perhaps, for his dash and *élan* in action,

► *The Battle of Jena, by Rugendas. A representation of the middle stages of the engagement at about 10.15 a.m., looking west and north-west with the windmill of Krippendorf to the right. Following the capture of Rödigén, the troops of IV Corps begin to outflank the centre of the Prussian Army from the right. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)*



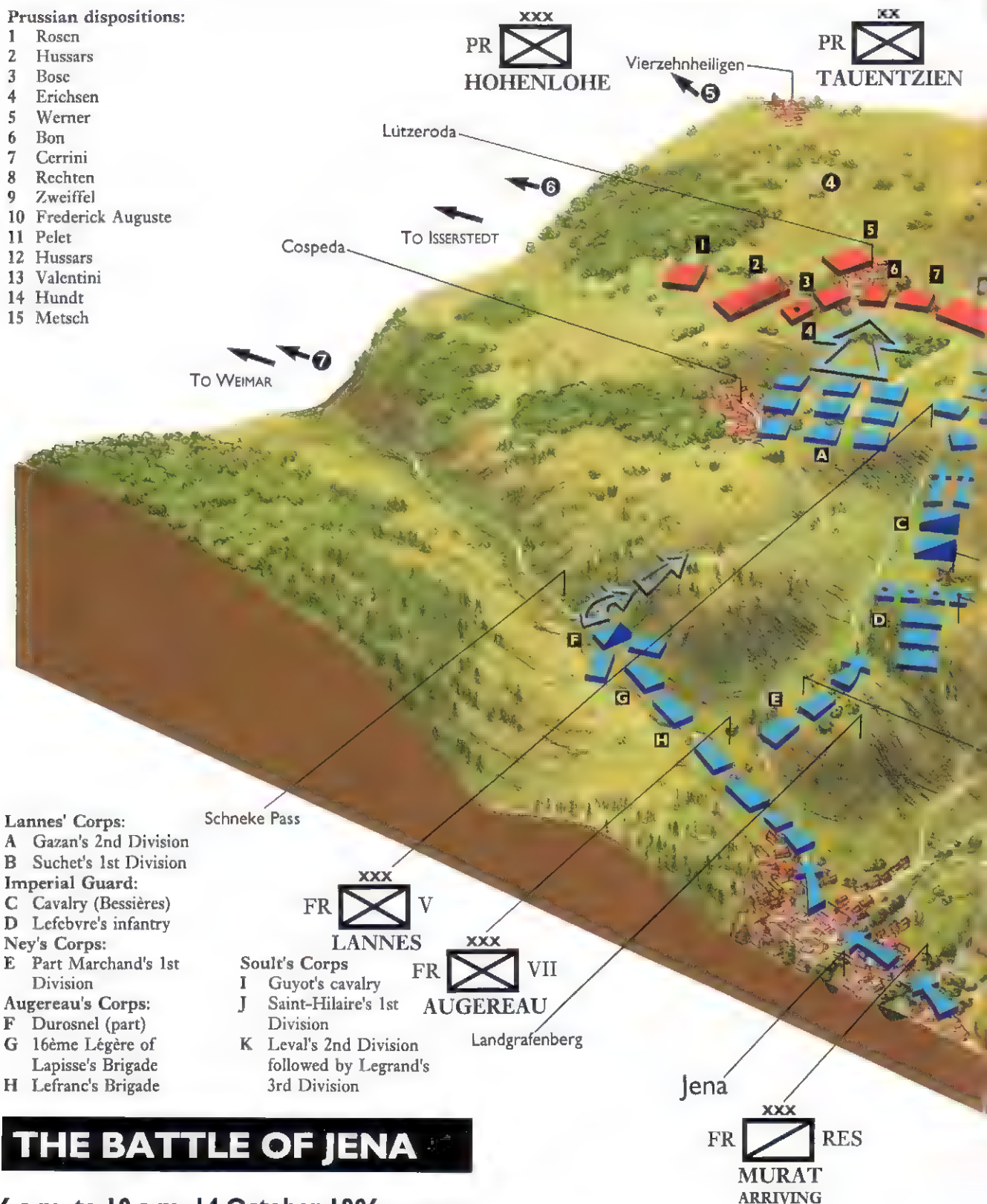
▲ *Nicolas Jean de Dieu Soult, by Johnson after de Laval. Marshal Soult (1769–1851) commanded the right flank of the Grande Armée at Jena at the head of the IV Corps, where his troops cleared von Hölzendorff's Prussians out of the Rödigén woods before capturing the village of*

*Nerkewitz. A fine tactician, Soult would become Duke of Dalmatia in June 1808. Thereafter he saw more than five years' service in Spain, rallied to Napoleon in 1815, and served as Chief of Staff during the Waterloo Campaign. (P. J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*



**Prussian dispositions:**

- 1 Rosen
- 2 Hussars
- 3 Bosc
- 4 Erichsen
- 5 Werner
- 6 Bon
- 7 Cerrini
- 8 Rechten
- 9 Zweifel
- 10 Frederick Auguste
- 11 Pelet
- 12 Hussars
- 13 Valentini
- 14 Hundt
- 15 Metsch



**Lannes' Corps:**

- A Gazan's 2nd Division
- B Suchet's 1st Division

**Imperial Guard:**

- C Cavalry (Bessières)
- D Lefebvre's infantry

**Ney's Corps:**

- E Part Marchand's 1st Division

**Augereau's Corps:**

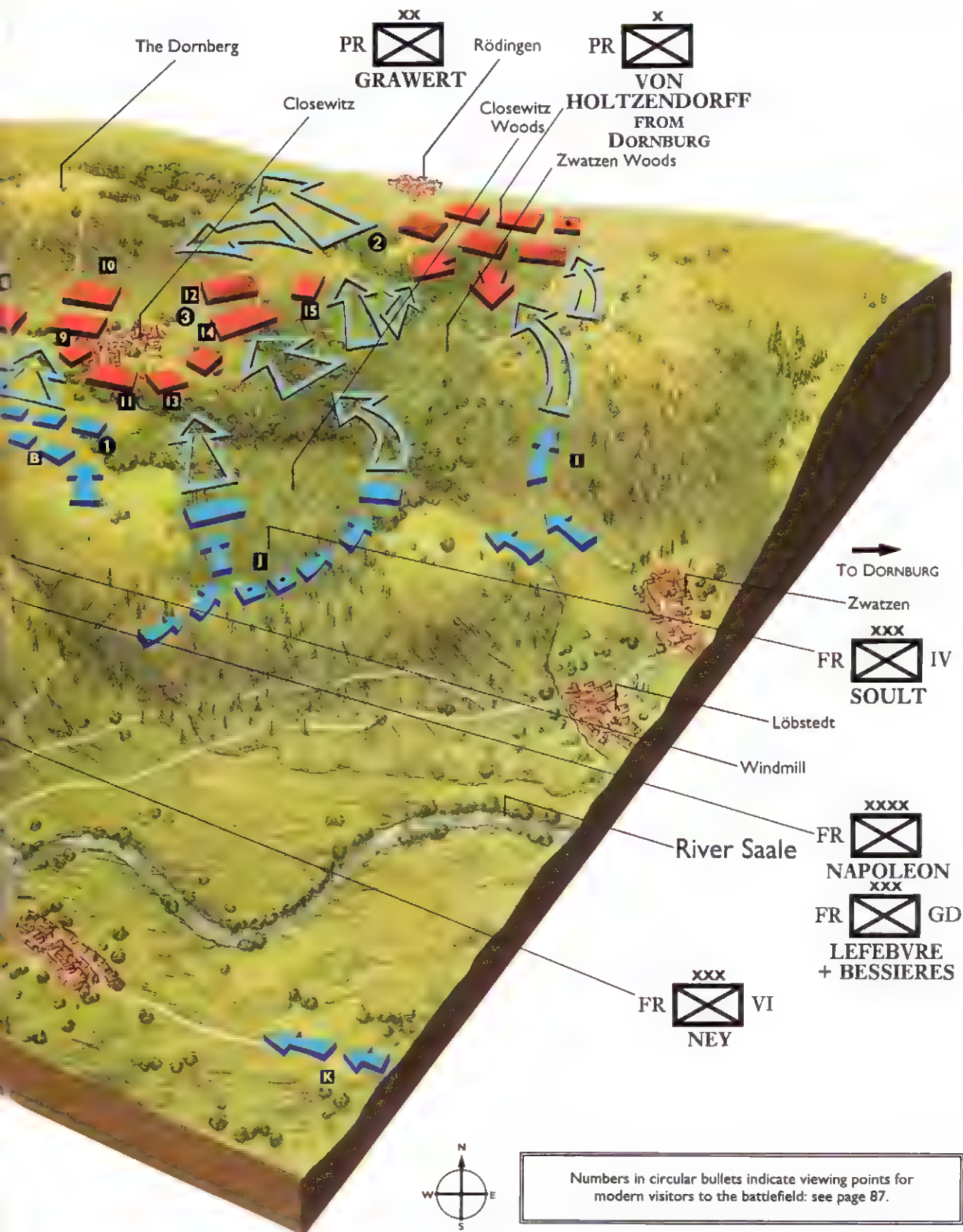
- F Durosnel (part)
- G 16ème Légère of Lapisse's Brigade
- H Lefranc's Brigade

**Soult's Corps**

- I Guyot's cavalry
- J Saint-Hilaire's 1st Division
- K Leval's 2nd Division followed by Legrand's 3rd Division

# THE BATTLE OF JENA

**6 a.m. to 10 a.m. 14 October 1806, as seen from the south**







where he was always to be found in or near the firing line, than for his brain-power. Summoned overnight to bring his VI Corps to join the Emperor, he had ridden hard for Jena with his staff and escort, alongside 7,300 horsemen of Murat's Cavalry Reserve, comprising the dragoon division of Klein and d'Hautpoul's cuirassiers (forming a cavalry screen on the slopes and intervening level ground to the west of the high road to Kahla) with Nansouty's heavies bringing up the rear. Arriving towards first light in the fog-shrouded town, the impatient Ney eventually received orders from Berthier to move with all dispatch up on to the plateau, and there to prepare to support the right flank of Lannes's V Corps to the east of Vierzeñheiligen.

In the meantime, on the farther side of the battlefield, Prince Hohenlohe was in earnest and concerned conclave with his staff near Klein Romstedt. By 9.30 a.m. tidings first sent and then brought over in person by General Tauentzien concerning the spread and increasing intensity of the fighting among the villages to his front had at last convinced the Prince that he was facing more than just the left flank of the *Grande Armée*. Deeming it to be his prime duty to secure the flank and rear of the 63,000-strong main Prussian Army

presently marching northwards (for Hohenlohe, like Napoleon, had no idea of what was in fact transpiring beyond the town of Auerstädt), he ordered most of his available reserves to reinforce the front line, and sent off messages towards Weimar to summon General Rüchel and his 15,000 men and 40 guns of the Detached Corps (often referred to as a separate 'army') to his assistance. To safeguard the Weimar road and thus cover Rüchel's anticipated approach, three Saxon brigades under General the Grand Duke von Zechawitz were sent off with strict orders to keep the road open at all costs. General Tauentzien was instructed to withdraw his battered formations a little to the rear; he would be replaced by a further force of Saxons and most of Lieutenant-General von Grawert's Division of the so-called 'Right Wing' which was in fact the reserve.

Marshal Ney, thirsting for action, had at once complied with Berthier's directive, and leaving staff officers to direct his foot-sore infantry of the corps main body as they arrived, he set off with such men as were with him (two squadrons of light cavalry and two battalions) to reach the centre of the battlefield. By the time he reached the plateau it was after 9.30 a.m. What he found was Lannes about to withdraw from Vierzeñheiligen under



▲ View from west of *Vierzehnheiligen*. Marshal Ney and his troops passed from right to left. (Author's photograph)

► Michel Ney, by Tietze after Gérard. The red-headed Marshal Ney (1769-1815) was one of the most popular and colourful members of the *Marshalate*. His rash intervention at Jena in the mid-morning of 14 October at the head of part of VI Corps on the wrong sector of the battlefield earned him a severe rebuke from the

Emperor. Later in the campaign he occupied Erfurt and successfully besieged the fortress of Magdeburg. His greatest hours would come in Russia (1812), where he would earn the nickname of 'bravest of the brave' for his stalwart command of the French rearguard during the retreat from Moscow, and be created Prince of the Moscowa. After Waterloo he was executed by a Bourbon firing-squad. (P. J. Haythornthwaite Collection)

mounting Prussian pressure, and clear signs that the embattled V Corps' right flank was already being supported by, and in actual contact with, the left wing of Saint-Hilaire's division. Thereupon, without thinking to refer to Napoleon or even to announce his intentions to Lannes or Augereau, Michel Ney took it upon himself to plunge headlong into the fighting at the head of the barely 3,000 men he had with him to the west of *Vierzehnheiligen*, relying on Augereau's VII Corps





◀ *French Guard infantry. Left: a Chasseur of la Garde Impériale in campaign dress of 1806–7. Right: an officer of the Grenadiers of the same élite formation in marching order. Illustration by Bryan Fosten.*

(fighting between Isserstedt and Lützenroda) to cover his left flank, and Lannes' V Corps his right. Grave consequences were to follow upon this headstrong and indisciplined decision which was to cause Napoleon caustically to remark that the Alsatian's grasp of the realities of war were manifestly less than those '... of the last-joined drummer-boy'.

Ney's sudden attack surprised the Prussians taking possession of blazing Vierzehnheiligen

(which Lannes had just abandoned). The fiery Frenchman captured the guns of the unsuspecting Steinmetz horse artillery battery, repulsed its cavalry guard and then two neighbouring regiments of cavalry, and proceeded to regain the much-contested village. With the bit well and truly between his teeth, Ney at once led his men on to occupy part of the Dornberg feature beyond. There, in the face of converging Prussian artillery fire, Ney's rash impetus not surprisingly died out.

► *Prussian light infantry of 1806. Left: an officer in greatcoat campaign order. Right: a private soldier in 1806 uniform. Both belong to the élite Foot Jaeger Regiment. Illustration by Bryan Fosten.*



Worse, to his immediate front, the Marshal could not but observe, through gaps in the billowing powder smoke, large numbers of opponents bearing down upon his intrepid but isolated and now fast dwindling band, as shot and bullet took their toll. For Hohenlohe had at last ordered an all-out attack against the central village sector, and all of 45 squadrons of cavalry, eleven Prussian infantry battalions under Dyhern and Grawert, supported by a large part of the Saxon division on their right

and by the fire of some 35 guns which Ney had already encountered, were marching forward. Very shortly Ney found his pair of light cavalry squadrons broken through, and in the very nick of time formed his infantry into square. He was now entirely cut off. Disaster loomed. It seemed that nothing could save 'the red-head'.

Fortunately for Ney these latest events had not gone unnoticed by Napoleon, riding with his 'little headquarters' and cavalry escort close behind



Lannes and near Lützenroda. Appalled by Ney's insubordination and overwhelming rashness, the Emperor took prompt action to redeem the situation. Sending a message to Lannes to launch another attack through Vierzeñnheiligen to make contact with Ney beyond, and another to Augereau to press on for Isserstedt to support the battered VI Corps' detachment's left wing, he ordered forward the only two regiments of available cavalry and called up the Guard artillery to plug the dangerous gap that was materializing in the French centre. These moves were made just in time, and illustrate the Emperor's flexibility of mind in a crisis.

For into this gap the Prussian cavalry were now pouring, by-passing Ney's tiny battalion squares, and charging on towards the Imperial Guard, held back in central reserve. Behind them came Hohenlohe's proud infantry, advancing in perfect order with colours displayed in a series of echelons of two battalions, right flank refused, left leading, with light artillery detachments in the intervals between – for all the world as steadily as if they had been on formal parade at Potsdam. It was a splendid and awesome sight for those able to see it from a distance. The battle of Jena was now fast reaching its climax. Excited Prussian and Saxon officers shouted to each other: 'Avenge Saalfeld! Avenge Prince Louis-Ferdinand!', as the disciplined Prussians and Saxons marched seemingly irresistibly towards the line of burning villages.

The din of battle reached a new crescendo. The intrepid but decimated veterans of Gazan's Second Division of V Corps advanced into the ruined streets of Vierzeñnheiligen, only for the *21ème Légère* to find themselves under heavy fire from Prussian *Jäger*. A confused and costly battle raged through the streets and around the houses and backyards, but the French eventually gained the upper hand. Hohenlohe ordered his infantry against the houses, but his colonels halted near the edge of the village and poured in disciplined volleys of musketry fire. Although the Prussians had scant recent experience of street fighting, the main reason for these delays was Hohenlohe's decision to await Rüchel's reinforcements to redress the numerical balance to some degree. But Lannes's columns of division were now pressing

through and round the village, penetrating the dense clouds of powder smoke to approach the Dornberg beyond. Here they clashed with the Prussian main infantry force. The first massed volleys brought Lannes's men to a stop. Another minute, and they found themselves being bundled back into Vierzeñnheiligen. But, before this, part of Gazan's command had made brief contact with Ney's right. More help was also materializing from Desjardin's First Division of VII Corps. A well-pressed attack cleared the last Prussians out of Isserstedt, and five minutes later contact was at last established with Ney's left. His exhausted and smoke-grimed survivors – down to their last few rounds of ammunition – drew off thankfully towards Isserstedt.

Thus the commander and detachment of VI Corps had been rescued and restored to the main line of battle, but only after a costly and time-consuming effort. 'Space I may regain, time never,' was one of Napoleon's favourite military maxims, and to his chagrin some of the latter had per force been sacrificed. The Emperor lost no time in expressing his views to a crestfallen Ney. As General Savary mentioned a little later, 'he said a few words to him on the subject, albeit with delicacy'. It was now almost 11.30 a.m. The battle had been raging for four hours. The decision of the day's fighting remained to be reached, but more and more French troops were arriving over the Saale, travel-stained but battle-fresh, as the balance of Soult and Ney's commands and of Murat's Reserve Cavalry made their appearance. By 12.30 p.m. the 54,000 French troops already engaged would be reinforced by a further 42,000 men. The excellence of the Emperor's operational planning abilities has seldom been better illustrated. But the battle had still to be won.

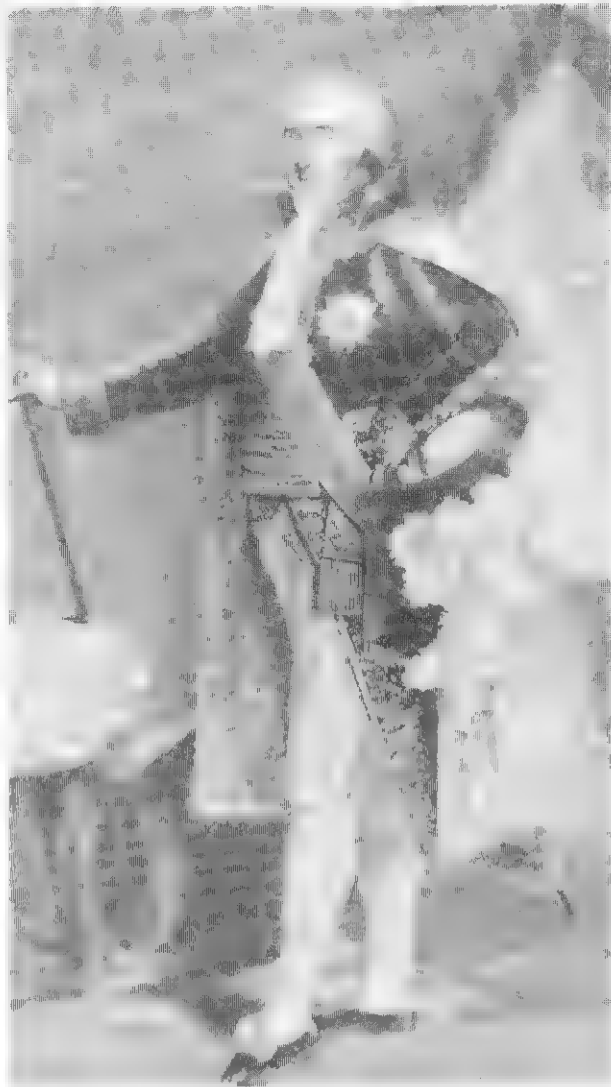
### Jena – the Coup de Grâce

Five miles away to the north-east, Marshal Bernadotte's I Corps' advance guard was just approaching Dornburg on the Saale. It found the going difficult. Its commander thereupon halted his column and sent forward his sappers to improve the way. The Gascon seemed to be paying little heed to the sounds of distant battle away to his

right and also to his left, but several of his staff covertly exchanged anxious glances. The unasked question was simple: could they still arrive in time to participate in the battle, or were they already too late? They knew that an urgent appeal from Marshal Davout had been rejected on the spot earlier that morning, and its bearer summarily dismissed. Still – it was not for lesser mortals to reason why. A little after midday, and I Corps was at last on the move again, over the river and up the steep escarpment beyond.

Back at Vierzeñheiligen and its neighbourhood matters were now moving ahead also. The deliberate halting of Hohenlohe's advance proved his undoing, for it once and for all sacrificed the initiative, and inevitably exposed his formations to further deadly pounding by the well-served French batteries. The French might have fewer guns in action but they were now making devastating use of them. The cancellation of the Prussian advance further attracted the dire attentions of French light infantry fire – from both the village and the potato fields in front of it whose furrows provided a little useful cover. The Prince later explained his decision by the need to allow Rüchel's troops and possibly Hölzendorff's to arrive, and thus permit him to clinch what some were already (but decidedly prematurely) claiming to be a Prussian victory. In effect, it caused Prussian casualties to mount remorselessly and to no good purpose. General von der Marwitz later recalled that the Prussian volleys were having no effect by this stage. Whole units were falling where they stood, and '... the area around the entrance of the village was the scene of the most terrible blood-letting and slaughter'.

Hoping to clinch matters with no further loss of time, Lannes launched yet another attack against the Prussian centre and left. The latter began to give ground, but a determined charge by Saxon cavalry forced Lannes back into Vierzeñheiligen once more. But Prince Hohenlohe made no attempt to follow up this temporary success, and soon he was receiving worrying reports that French light cavalry and above all their feared *tirailleurs* were remorselessly working their way around both his flanks. Worse, a report arrived that the Saxon brigades holding the Weimar road



▲ *Pierre François Charles Augereau, by Johnson after Lefevre. As commander of VII Corps, Marshal Augereau (1757-1816) was entrusted with the left wing of the Grande Armée at Jena. Nicknamed 'the Proud Bandit' for his reputation as a looter, Augereau came*

*from humble origins. He had emerged as a skilled commander at the Battle of Castiglione in 1796. At Jena he made himself master of Cospeda after negotiating the Snecke Pass. (P.J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*

had been cut off by a force that had passed through Isserstedt Wood comprising a brigade of VII Corps' Second Division and part of Ney's leading division, commanded by General Jean Gabriel Marchand, which had now at last reached the field. Furthermore, there were unmistakable signs that more fresh French troops were appearing

from the direction of Jena's bridge. And where, in God's name, was Rüchel? Prince Hohenlohe accordingly decided against ordering any new attacks, and used all his last remaining reserves – save for General Taubert's battered survivors – to patch his centre-right, where a heavy attack by

General Antoine Durosnel's *chasseurs-à-cheval* forming VII Corps' cavalry brigade had badly damaged Grawert's right flank and created a dangerous gap in the Prussian battle-line. The time was now a little after one o'clock.

Napoleon was now ready to launch his clinch-



▲ French Guard infantry. A 'grogner' (or 'grumbler') of the Fusiliers-Grenadiers in the campaign dress of

1806. The shako would usually be worn inside a leather case. Illustration by Bryan Fosten.



▲ Prussian cavalry of 1806. Trumpeter of the von Quitzow (No. 6) Cuirassier Regiment,

1806. Illustration by Bryan Fosten.

► *The Battle of Jena, by J. Chéreau. The decisive moment came when Napoleon ordered Prince Murat to unleash his heavy cavalry at about 1.45 p.m. The French cuirassiers of the Cavalry Reserve soon disposed of the opposition – and the Prussian Army began to retreat from the field, at first in good order; but soon the formations began to flee in the general direction of Weimar. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)*



ing attack, *le coup de foudre*. Aides-de-camp had already borne off messages to his corps commanders. On the left VII Corps was to concentrate on destroying the Saxons near the Weimar–Jena road, while on the far right Saint-Hilaire was to attack what was left of Hölzendorff's reduced formations, with IV Corps' recently arrived Second and Third Divisions under Generals Legrand and Leval in support. Once the two attacks on the flanks had been well and truly launched, the full remaining strength of V and VI Corps was to smash through the Prussians – whereupon Murat's massed squadrons would exploit the breach and clinch the day. To its fury the Imperial Guard was not to be engaged except in an emergency. As the Emperor rode past the disgruntled bearskinned ranks with Prince Murat and Marshal Lefebvre by his side, a *véliste* grenadier removed his headgear and called out 'Forward!' 'What is that?' inquired the Emperor, reining in his steed. 'Only a beardless youth would presume to judge in advance what I should do. Let him wait until he has commanded in thirty pitched battles before he dares give me advice!'

At 12.30 p.m. everything was ready – and Napoleon ordered the onslaught to begin. All along the line artillery moved forward to pour canister into the enemy. On the left, Augereau's men of the 7ème and 20ème *Chasseurs-à-Cheval*, who had been champing at the bit since 11.30 a.m., charged uphill against the Prussians, broke

through two lines, but then became separated and proved incapable of turning their opponents' defeat into a rout. The Weimar road became the scene of hard fighting. Major Castex of the 7ème *Chasseurs*, deputizing for his sick colonel, led a brilliant charge which scattered a Saxon battalion, but failed to clear the road. Similar pressures were exerted on all sectors as the three French *corps d'armée* swept into the attack. The Prussians and Saxons could not withstand the pressure, and began to give ground, whereupon Prince Hohenlohe ordered a general withdrawal to the ground between Gross and Klein Romstedt. The withdrawal began in good order, but then dissolved into chaos as Napoleon unleashed Murat's massed squadrons. There was now no chance of the Prussians reforming any kind of battle-line, and many fled for Weimar. But for the staunch action of Colonel Winkel, who formed his grenadiers into a square in the centre near Gross Romstedt and helped cover the flight of his compatriots, Prussian casualties would have been even worse. A similar deed of valour by what was left of Tauentzien's Division in the north permitted Grawert's men to reform before heading for Apolda – but not without the loss of eight colours, sixteen cannon and 2,500 prisoners of war. The Battle of Jena was all but over by 2.30 p.m. – and Napoleon had achieved another triumph.

There was, however, a postscript to be played out. As half the Prussian fugitives poured away

westwards, they suddenly came upon a formed force deployed for battle between the villages of Gross Romstedt to the north and Kötschau, hard by the Weimar–Jena high road, to the south. This force of 15,000 men was Rüchel's command, at last making its tardy appearance from Weimar. Its commander, who had somehow taken five hours to cover the ten kilometres from that town, was too late to change the outcome of the battle, but did manage to hold up the French launch of an all-out pursuit of Hohenlohe. It has been argued that Rüchel would have been better advised to have deployed his troops along the west bank of the Herressener Bach garrisoning Kappellendorf strongly in its centre. Instead he chose to advance over the stream, and take post in echelon order upon the open plain between the two villages mentioned, with both flanks unsecured.

Although Rüchel's apparently slow approach is often blamed, in fact he performed well. He was still encamped at Weimar when at 9 a.m. he got the order to move to join Hohenlohe. He broke camp immediately and set off for Jena at a fast pace, his infantry in columns of sections. At Umpferstedt, they deployed into platoon columns; rear and flank guards were thrown out, and the artillery was pulled out of the march columns. Allowing one hour to cover 5 kilometres and one to deploy, this manoeuvre lasted until about 11 a.m. At 10.30 a.m. Rüchel received a message from Hohenlohe telling him the battle was going well and that he was winning on all fronts. He marched to Kapellendorf, 4 kilometres away. This took about one hour. At about midday a courier arrived from Hohenlohe with a request for urgent assistance. Shortly before Rüchel got to Kapellendorf, an adjutant arrived with the news that Hohenlohe had been beaten. Just outside the village, Massenbach arrived and sent Rüchel off through Kapellendorf to attack. He moved his troops through Kapellendorf and deployed for battle. At 1.30 p.m. he went over to the offensive. Reaching Kapellendorf by 1 p.m. he had covered 12 kilometres in four hours. Taking into account the time needed to break camp, the time needed to change formation at Umpferstedt (where he left the main road and went across country), the fact that the first indication of any difficulties in the

situation was the message received at noon, Rüchel's movement was not at all slow but indeed a little faster than one might expect in the circumstances. He was in battle one and a half hours after the first message for urgent assistance. Apologists for Hohenlohe might point the finger of blame at poor Rüchel, but let us not forget that it was Hohenlohe who misjudged the situation and Hohenlohe who sent Rüchel off to battle when he should have used him to cover the retreat.

Prince Hohenlohe rode up with his staff and at once took over Rüchel's force. He then ordered it to advance to meet the pursuing French. The first contact came near Gross Romstedt, where Lannes' V Corps cavalry and horse artillery found themselves brought to an abrupt halt. Not for long, however. Up to Lannes' right flank came the hard-fighting division of Saint-Hilaire (part IV Corps), and soon the newcomers had found Rüchel's open flank and proceeded to turn it. Faced by frontal pressure and now another outflanking attack from the north, Rüchel could only order the retreat. He attempted to cover this with his cavalry, but concentrated French artillery fire soon broke its cohesion. As the surviving Prussian and Saxon horsemen shredded away to the west, a great thundering of hooves was heard, and down among them came the giant steeds of the dreaded French cuirassiers, their helmet-plumes tossing, breast-plates gleaming in the afternoon sunlight, and long straight swords stabbing to left and right. This was too much for Rüchel's retiring columns, and very soon they, too, had been transformed into a mass of fugitives fleeing towards Weimar.

It was a little after three o'clock – and the Battle of Jena was truly over. An hour later and Prince Murat's hell-for-leather pursuit was well under way, its gorgeously uniformed commander scornfully wielding a riding-whip rather than a sabre. By 6 p.m. he was in the outskirts of Weimar. An hour earlier Ney had reached Apolda – and shortly after made contact with the advance guard of Bernadotte's I Corps gingerly advancing from Dornberg, too late by two hours to sever the Prussian line of northwards retreat which was now greatly encumbered by a new stream of fugitives arriving to meet it from the direction of Auerstädt.

At a cost of about 5,000 men, Napoleon and



the main body of the *Grande Armée* had inflicted the loss of 10,000 killed and wounded and 15,000 prisoners of war, 34 colours and 120 cannon upon Hohenlohe's and Rüchel's elements of the Prussian Army. It was only late that afternoon, however,

that Napoleon learnt to his complete amazement that the real laurels of 14 October had been earned by another – Marshal Louis Nicolas Davout – some eight miles away between Hassenhausen and Auerstädt.

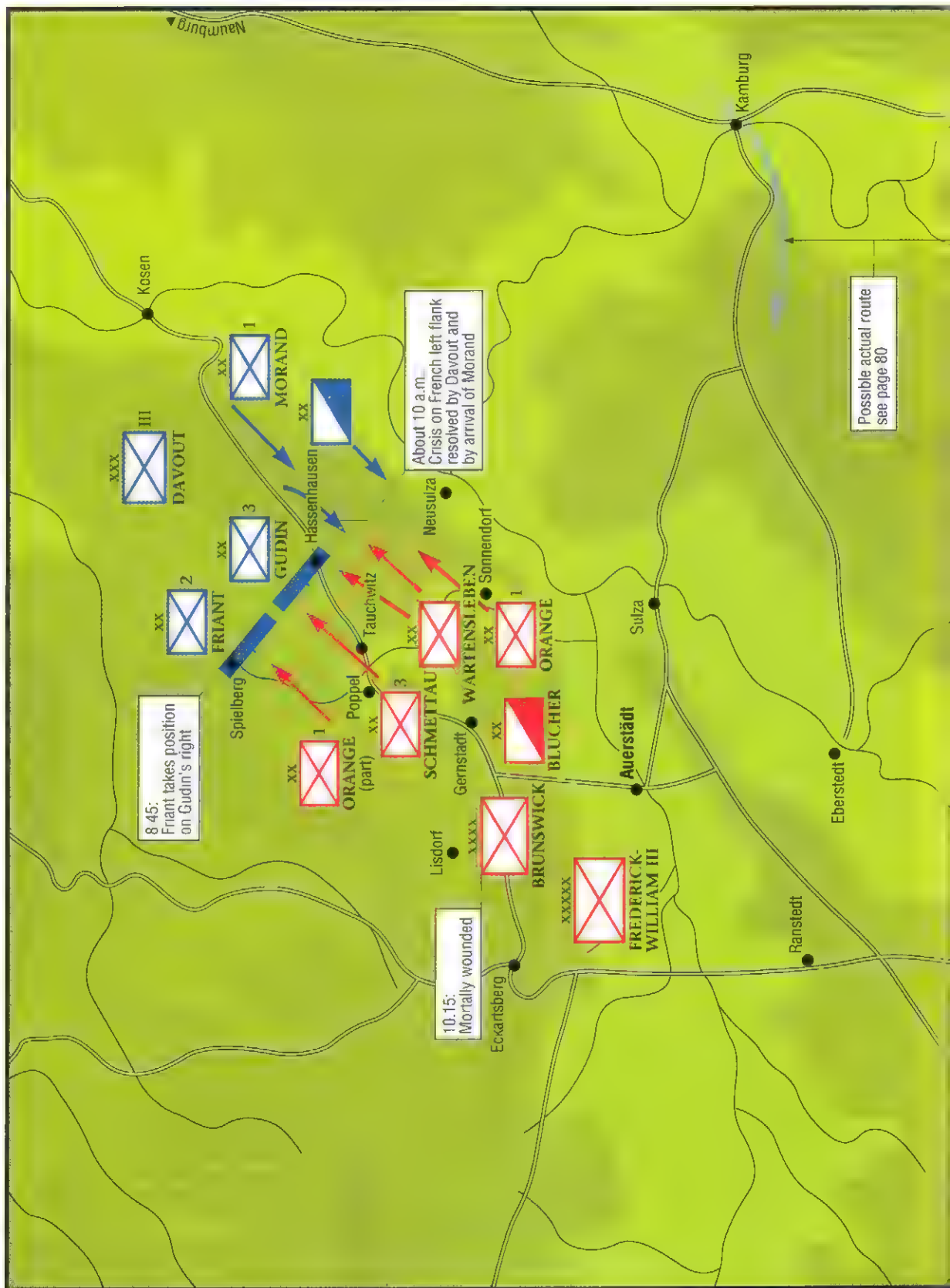
► **Murat leading the Cavalry at Jena, by H. Chartier.** Prince Murat charged at the head of the attached light cavalry of V, VI and VII corps d'armée, the cuirassier regiments of General d'Hautpoul, and two regiments of Klein's dragoons, passing between *Vierzehnheiligen* and *Isserstedt* villages. Murat pursued the Prussian fugitives as far as *Weimar*, taking all of 6,000 prisoners. (Author's Collection)

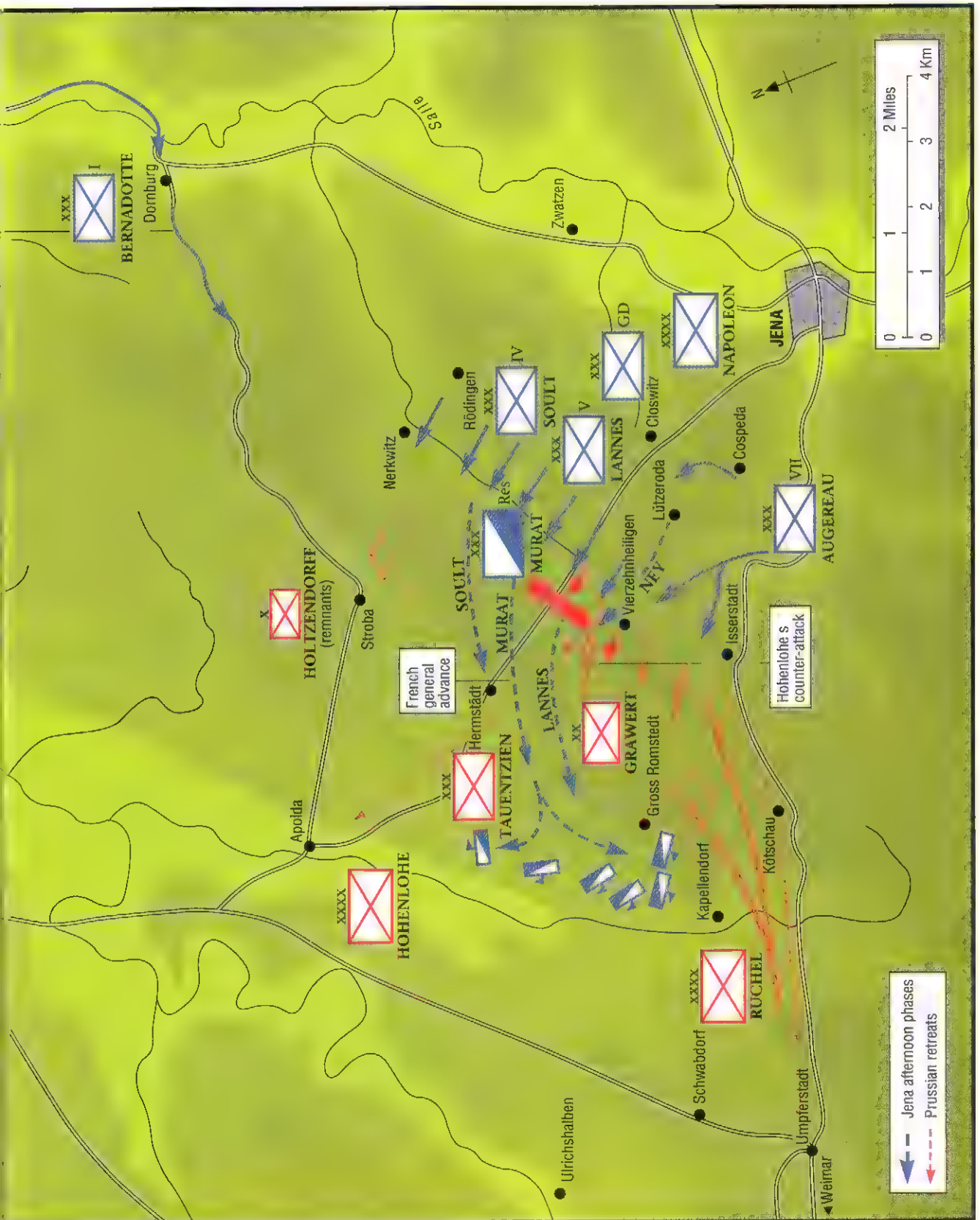


▼ **The Evening of Jena by Détaillé.** Napoleon receives the plaudits of the *Grande Armée* as captured Prussian colours – many of them destined to be proudly displayed at *les Invalides* in *Paris* – are triumphantly brought to him. (Author's Collection)



# Jena and Auerstadt, c. 10 a.m. to Midday







▲ **Charles Etienne Gudin de la Sablonnière**, by Forestier. Of aristocratic background, General Gudin (1768-1812) bore the main brunt of the Battle of Auerstädt at the head of the 3rd Division of III Corps, being the first

major formation into action. He was wounded, and his command suffered 40 per cent casualties. In 1812 he would die of wounds sustained at Valutina. (Author's Collection)



▲ **Louis Friant**, by Forestier. General Friant (1758-1829) commanded the 2nd Division of Davout's III Corps with distinction on 14 October 1806. He reached the

battlefield from the Kosen Pass in the nick of time to succour Gudin. Years later, he would command the Grenadiers of the Old Guard at Waterloo. (Author's Collection)



# AUERSTADT

Following his unsatisfactory interview with Marshal Bernadotte early on the 14th, Davout lost no time in warning III Corps to be ready to move in two hours' time. The marshal had no idea of what he might face. Although patrol reports the previous afternoon had reported contacts with Prussian cavalry, and during the night there had been indications of considerable enemy troop movements to the west, he still lacked any firm information. Unbeknown to him, the main Prussian Army (some 63,000 men strong) had been marching north all day, by-passing Apolda and heading for Auerstädt and Eckartsberg, some 10 kilometres west of the River Saale, en route for distant Freiburg and ultimately Halle (where Württemberg's reserve corps of 15,000 men was presently situated, after moving south from the great fortress of Magdeburg). The Duke of Brunswick was not seeking battle: indeed he had ordered his subordinates to avoid action on the

14th, for rumour had it that Napoleon was at Naumburg in person.

Davout had two problems to solve. First, he faced a steep climb up the Kosen Pass once III Corps had crossed the river; second, he could find neither the greater part of General Viallane's *chasseurs à cheval*, comprising the corps' cavalry, nor its commander. It later transpired that the general had gone off on a horse-stealing mission, hoping to profit from their resale, and then had fallen fast asleep. Although he and his men would appear later on the 14th, this episode ensured that Viallanes would not remain long attached to Davout's corps. By 5.30 a.m. the marshal – dressed, as was his custom on days of battle, in full

▼ *The battlefield of Auerstädt I. View from Prussian left wing (Schmettau's position) looking east towards the*

*line of advance of Friant's division of III Corps at 9.30 a.m. (Author's photograph)*





uniform – had joined Gudin's labouring infantry at the top of the pass, and with them set off through the dense fog towards the village of Hassenhausen some five kilometres to the west, Davout's aide-de-camp, Colonel Burke and 80 cavalymen of the *1er Chasseurs* scouting ahead.

Suddenly, at 7 a.m., there was a brisk exchange of fire ahead near Pöppel. A temporary lift in the

fog and Burke had found himself in the midst of four squadrons of Prussian cavalry and a battery of guns – to everybody's surprise. After a sharp action

▼ *Prussian Guard cavalry of 1806. Left to right: officer of the Garde du Corps (Royal Bodyguard), 1806; Guardsman; non-*

*commissioned officer – both of the same formation as the officer. Illustration by Bryan Fosten.*



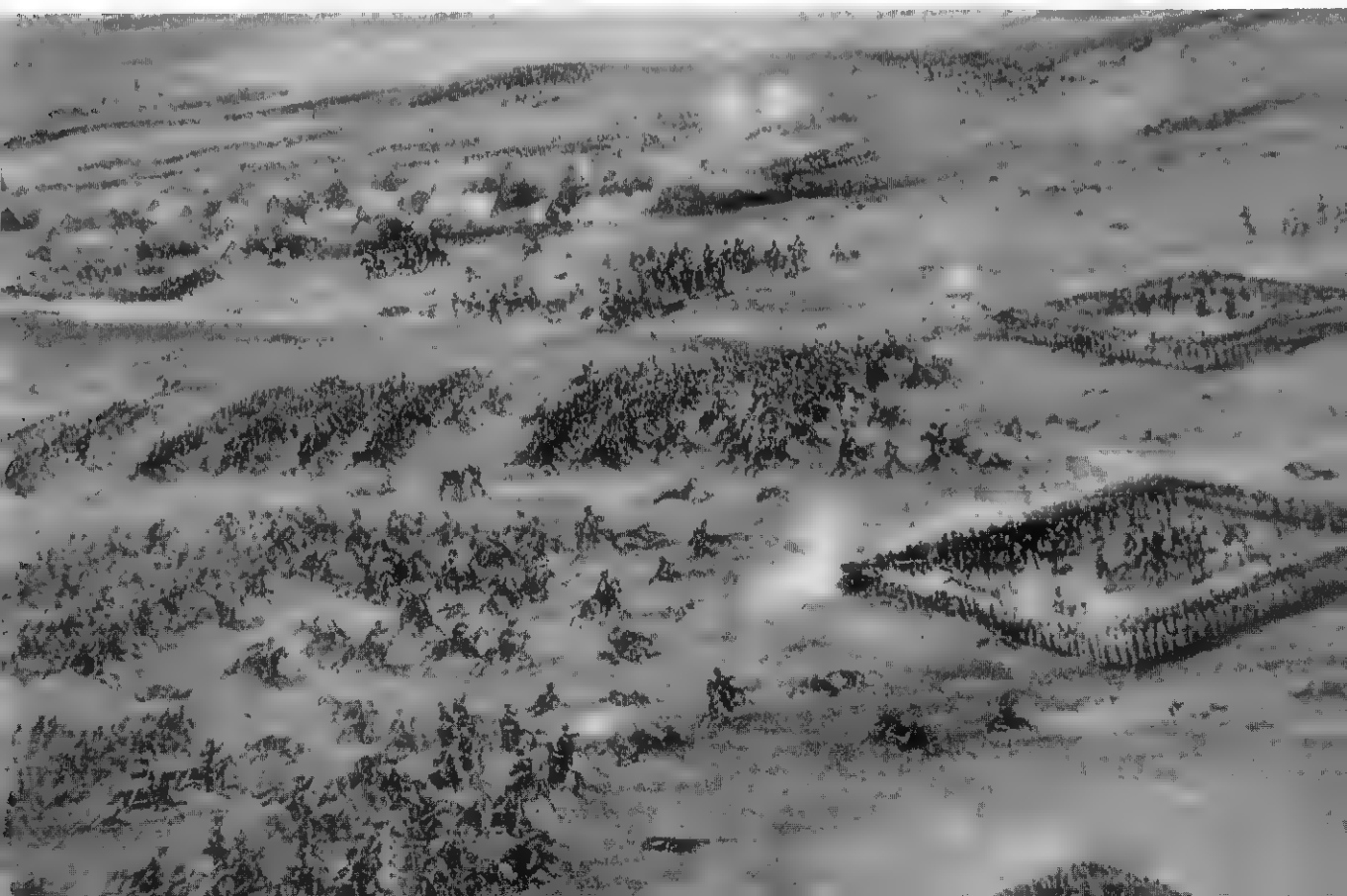
the fog came down again, and the French fell back on the heads of Gudin's leading columns of his 3rd Division, formed by the 25<sup>ème</sup> and 85<sup>ème</sup> Regiments of the Line. Davout ordered *Général de Brigade* Gauthier to form square – which enabled his men to rout a two-squadron charge by the pursuing Prussian *de la Reine* Regiment. The remainder of Gudin's 8,000-strong 3rd Division was also forming square as a precaution when the mist abruptly rolled away revealing the Prussians present in some strength. The French divisional artillery opened fire immediately, and soon silenced the Prussian horse battery, causing their cavalry and a battalion of grenadiers to withdraw. Davout ordered Gudin to occupy Hassenhausen without delay, and to push patrols one kilometre further to the banks of the Lissbach. Davout realized that all would depend on the timely arrival of Friant's 2nd and Morand's 1st Divisions. But at 8 o'clock the former was still around Bad Kosen, and the latter was only approaching the Saale bridge. A message was already en route to Bernadotte entreating him to support III Corps. There would be no reply.

### The Growing Battle for Hassenhausen

Fortunately for Gudin, only Schmettau's Division of nine battalions was able to join Blücher's sixteen squadrons, with 24 guns between them. Behind them, two more Prussian divisions (those of Wartensleben and Orange) had become badly entangled with baggage convoys. Gudin fell back from Pöppel in face of Schmettau's infantry, intent on occupying the vicinity of Hassenhausen in strength. The advancing Prussian infantry reeled back in the face of a storm of case-shot, and Blücher's first hot-headed and unsupported charges – watched by both King Frederick-William III and Brunswick and their staffs – troubled Gautier's and Petit's veterans not a whit. Blücher fell back to reform. Forward darted

▼ *The Battle of Auerstädt, by Gobaut. A fine panoramic view, showing the village of Hassenhausen in the centre, and Morand's 1st Division formed in square*

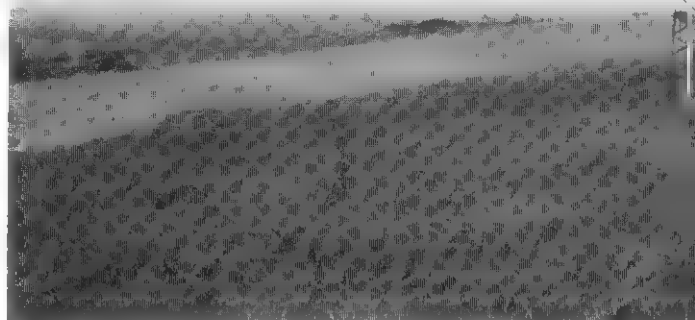
*on the left of Davout's line of battle under heavy Prussian cavalry attack, 30 squadrons strong. The squares beat off five successive attacks. (Author's Collection)*



Davout's squadron of *chasseurs* accompanied by Assistant-Provost-Marshal Louis Saunier and his detachment of military police, who promptly took possession of the guns of another Prussian battery. Davout, peering to and fro through his spectacles, grimly placed the men of 3rd Division in, and to the north and west of Hassenhausen, and waited upon events.

By 8.30 a.m. Wartensleben's Division had at last been brought up to prolong Schmettau's right, and the odds against Gudin doubled. At one point Blücher passed ten squadrons – six of them cuirassiers – around Gudin's right flank near Spielberg. Gudin's battalions instantly formed square, and repeated Prussian charges achieved little as Blücher had no accompanying infantry or guns with him. Indeed this episode ended in a complete Prussian failure. General Reitzenstein fell mortally wounded to the great alarm of his heavy cavalry, and then Blücher's horse crashed to the ground. Their commander's disappearance caused all the surviving Prussian horsemen to disengage and retire with speed. Blücher, bruised but unwounded, caught a free horse and was at once back in the saddle, and set about reforming his cavalry. But this was only a preliminary to Schmettau's frontal attack against the village, backed by Wartensleben's outflanking movement. The onslaught, when it came, shook the French defenders of Hassenhausen to their very core, but they held on.

Fortunately the Prussians were taking their time between attacks, and this allowed the bulk of Davout's recalcitrant cavalry brigade and the leading elements of Friant's 2nd Division to reach the front line. The marshal ordered Friant to take post on Gudin's right towards the village of Spielberg. The seventeen 12pdrs of the Corps Artillery also made a welcome appearance at this juncture, and were placed on a small knoll just north of the village. Calculating that the next enemy onslaught would be to the north of the village, Davout resited most of Gudin's men in that sector, leaving only the 85<sup>ème</sup> of the Line to the west and south of Hassenhausen. More urgent messages for aid were sent off to Bernadotte; even if he would come there must be a long delay. He would not.



▲ *The battlefield of Auerstädt II. View from south of Hassenhausen (extreme right) looking west towards the village of Pöppel (left centre mid-distance). At about 11.30 a.m. on 14 October 1806,*

*Morand's division of III Corps (with Gudin on the right) advanced from right to left against Orange's infantry, Blücher's cavalry and Wartensleben's command. (Author's photograph)*

Shortly before 10 a.m. Brunswick ordered a major attack against both flanks of the village. Schmettau's men were soon caught in the deadly cross-fire of the two French divisions now north of the village, and began to give ground. To the south, however, the isolated and hopelessly outnumbered 85<sup>ème</sup> took the full brunt of Wartensleben's onslaught, and fell back, all but routed. To the rescue came Marshal Davout in person. Rallying the survivors behind Hassenhausen, he brought up the 12<sup>ème</sup> and 21<sup>ème</sup> from Gudin's second line to reoccupy the village and repel the Prussians. Stability was thus restored to the French line; but it had been a near-run thing, and every last man was now in the firing line.

Once again the Prussian command took its time in attempting to exploit its undoubted superiority on the open flank. Instead, attack after attack was launched at the village itself. At this



► **The Battle of Auerstädt.** Inaccurately entitled the *Battle of Jena*, this print shows King Francis-William III of Prussia at Auerstädt, where he had a horse killed beneath him. Mesmerized by the fallacious idea that he was fighting Napoleon and the main French Army, he proved inadequate as a commander after the Duke of Brunswick was killed. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)



juncture disaster befell the Prussian Army. The Duke of Brunswick fell mortally wounded at the head of a regiment of grenadiers, shot through both eyes, and General Schmettau was also disabled almost simultaneously. The attacks degenerated into a spoiling free-fight. It was some time before the king decided to assume command in person – and another exhausted lull spread over

the battlefield. Ominously, however, 30 Prussian squadrons were massing opposite the battered French left flank – but so restricted was the ground that they found it impossible to manoeuvre. A little more time had been won for Davout. But casualties were fast mounting. There were signs that a new Prussian formation – the division of the Prince of Orange – was about to



PR  **VON ARNIM**

FR  **VIALLANES**  
(6 SQNS)

PR  **ORANGE** 1 (part)

Spielberg

Pöppel

Lissdorf

TO ECKARTSBERG

PR  **SCHMETTAU** 3

PR  (part)  
**BLUCHER**

Gernstadt

PR  **RES**  
**KALKREUTH**  
**Auerstadt**

River Emsen

PR  **FREDERICK-WILLIAM III + BRUNSWICK**

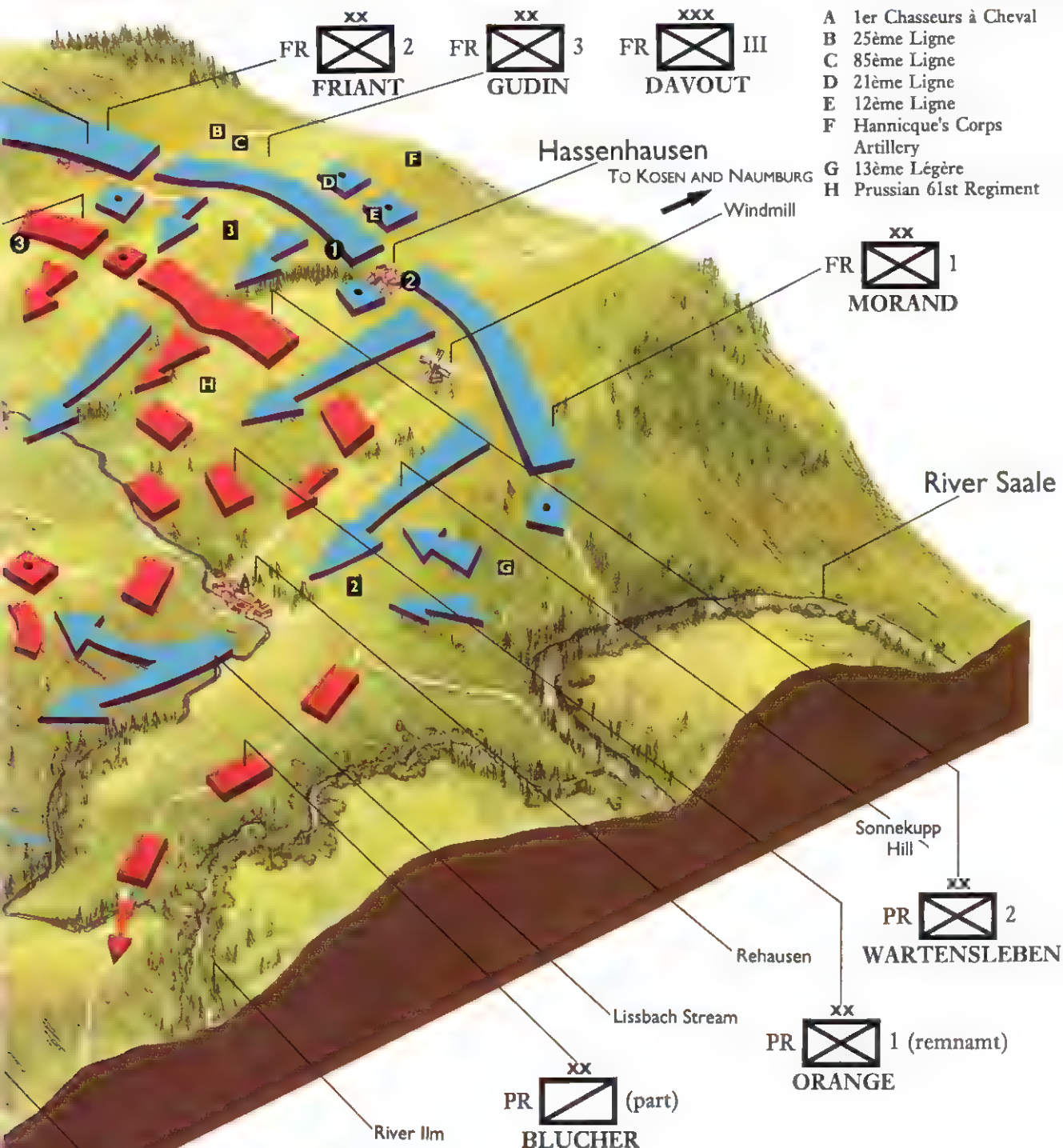
*Prussian convoys and trains filling the roads*

Numbers in circular bullets indicate viewing points for modern visitors to the battlefield: see page 87.

## THE BATTLE OF AUERSTADT

The general advance of III Corps, c.12.15 p.m.  
14 October 1806, as seen from the south







▲ **Charles Antoine Louis Alexis Morand, by Forestier.** As commander of the 1st Division of III Corps, General Morand (1771-1835) had an important part to play at Auerstädt, where he

*reinforced his colleagues at a critical moment and was also wounded. He handled his division extremely well tactically on the left flank. (Author's Collection)*

enter the battle. Could his men withstand another all-out attack? The odds appeared long indeed.

Two circumstances saved III Corps. First, Frederick-William III ill-advisedly directed William-Frederick, Prince of Orange, to divide his command in two – and to send half to reinforce each end of the Prussian battle-line. Had it been committed complete on either flank, victory might well have been the outcome. As it was, this manoeuvre cost more precious time to complete. Second – and more significant – was the arrival of General Morand's 1st Division (10,000 strong) from the Kosen defile, where it had dropped off a battalion to watch the bridge.

It was 11 a.m. The newcomers took post south of Hassenhaussen on Davout's left, and proceeded to show their mettle in no uncertain terms. Covered by part of the Corps Cavalry on its left flank, and with the complete *13ème Légère*, two

battalions strong, under General Bonnet d'Hilliers and Colonel Guyardet, shaken out into skirmishing order to guard its front against surprise, the leading brigade of line infantry commanded by General Louis Debilly deployed into a line of six battalion columns, while General Etienne Brouard carried out the same evolution with four battalions of the *17ème* and *30ème* Regiments of the line. The 8pdrs of the divisional artillery were placed on each flank. As each column sent forward its light or *voltigeur* company to form a loose skirmisher screen to its front, the *13ème Légère* doubled over to reform on the divisional open flank. Advancing westwards, this impressive force soon made contact with the 3rd Division's *12ème Régiment* near Hassenhaussen, arriving at precisely the right moment to halt another Prussian infantry attack in its tracks. The well-drilled columns smartly reformed into a continuous line to exchange volley firing with the enemy infantry, coming off decidedly the best in the encounter. Sharp orders then caused the seven battalions on the left to form square, as watchful eyes had detected that the 30 massed Prussian squadrons were at last in motion. The remainder of Morand's troops manned the walls and hedgerows adjoining the village, retaining their full fire-power. The ground shook as the 30 squadrons thundered up past the windmill to assail the squares, but as they came they took a daunting fire at 30 paces from the troops in cover. Five times the Prussian horsemen came on, and five times they were repelled with mounting loss. At length they recoiled. Without any hesitation, Morand's Division formed back into line of battalion columns, and with a cheer advanced against the neighbouring Prussian infantry, pushing it back at bayonet point over the Lissbach. Whereupon, the well-disciplined troops halted to await further orders. It had been a devastating display of French tactical flexibility which even the Prussians had perforce to admire.

This all proved too much for the men of Wartensleben's Division. The arrival of half of Orange's command did nothing to relieve their discomfiture. Their cavalry had now abandoned them – and the Prussian right wing began to melt away, taking the newcomers with them. There were still fourteen battalions of fresh troops, five



squadrons of cavalry and three batteries uncommitted to the fray, but the dazed Prussian monarch – hopelessly out of his depth, and mesmerized all day by the erroneous belief that he was fighting Napoleon in person – was only thinking in terms of survival. He was a defeated man, and with him his army.

### The French Advance

It was now a little past noon. With precise timing, Davout moved from the defensive into the all-out attack. Adopting a menacing crescent-shaped formation, flanks advanced, all three divisions swept forward. The battle became murderous at close-quarters, the French *61ème* of Morand's Division taking especially heavy losses, most of them from point-blank cannon fire. 'Each move . . . [of the Regiment]', its corps commander later recalled, 'was indicated on the ground by the brave men it left there.' But Morand never paused until he had reached Reheausen, and beyond it Sonnekuppe Hill, from which vantage point his divisional guns wrought red havoc with the flank and rear of Wartensleben's Division. On the northern flank Friant fought a bitter fight to take Pöppel – but soon succeeded, taking more than 1,000 prisoners.

▲ *The Eckartsberg Heights – farthest point reached by Davout's*

*pursuit on the afternoon of the 14th. (Author's photograph)*

By 12.30 p.m., the Prussian Army was in full retreat west, south and north. A brave attempt by Generals Kalkreuth and Blücher to form a covering rearguard near Gemstädt came to naught when Gudin's men attacked frontally in association with outflanking moves by Morand and Friant. There seemed to be no stopping the French: for four whole hours they maintained the pressure until, nigh utterly exhausted, they halted atop the Heights of Eckartsberg, from which they looked down upon Auerstädt. The Corps Cavalry, now all nine squadrons strong, and the battalion summoned up from the Kosen defile, attempted to maintain the pressure and hound the enemy southwards, but there was a limit to how much could be expected of tired men. Davout therefore ordered a general halt at about 4.30 p.m. By that time Colonel Falcon was already riding hell-for-leather towards Jena bearing news of III Corps' triumph to the Emperor.

There had been a heavy price to pay. Although 10,000 Prussians lay dead and 3,000 more had been taken prisoner, together with 115 cannon, III

Corps' casualty returns show that fully 25 per cent of its strength had become casualties. No less than 258 officers and 6,794 rank and file had been killed or wounded (Gudin's 3rd Division alone losing more than 40 per cent of its strength). Miraculously, some units came through unscathed. One such was the formation of Gunner Gaspard Leva of the *1er Régiment Principal du Train*, 1st Division. 'Our company was lucky,' he wrote later. 'We lost not a single man, thank God,

although our *Corps d'Armée* suffered very much.' Soon almost all the survivors were enjoying the sleep of the just. Their's had by any standard been an outstanding achievement.

▼ *Prussian light infantry of 1806. Portrayed are: left, private soldier of the élite Guard Schuetzen; centre, private soldier of the Infantry Regiment von Rüchel's Schuetzen*

*detachment; right, Schuetzen horn player of the von Puttkamer Infantry Regiment. Illustration by Bryan Fosten.*



# AFTERMATH AND AN ACCOUNTING

Marshal Bernadotte's lame but typically bombastic explanation of his extraordinary behaviour on the 14th – which had resulted in his I Corps taking part in neither battle – cut no ice with his furious master. 'According to a very precise order, you ought to have been at Dornburg . . . on the same day [the 13th] that Marshal Lannes was at Jena and Davout reached Naumburg. In case you had failed to execute these orders, I informed you during the night that if you were still at Naumburg when this order arrived you should march with Marshal Davout and support him. You were at Naumburg when this order arrived; it was communicated to you; this notwithstanding, you preferred to execute a false march in order to make for Dornburg, and in consequence you took no part in the battle and Marshal Davout bore the principal efforts of the enemy's army.' A court-martial indictment was prepared for signature.

As Marbot recalled: 'The army expected to see Bernadotte severely punished.' But Napoleon de-

cided otherwise: he tore up the order. 'This business is so hateful,' he confided to Savary, head of intelligence, 'that if I send him before a court-martial it will be tantamount to ordering him to be shot . . . but I shall take care he shall know what I think of his behaviour. I believe he has sufficient honour to recognize that he has performed a disgraceful act, about which I shall not bandy words with him.' This leniency was probably based on two considerations. The hour of victory is not often the appropriate moment to punish a very senior officer. And the fact that the Prince of Ponte-Corvo was married to Désirée Clary – a flame of Napoleon's youth – may have influenced the decision. As for Bernadotte, although he continued to bluster about the propriety of his decisions, he once let the mask slip when he admitted: 'I might have been piqued at receiving something like orders from Davout. But I performed my duty.' The two men had never got on with each other, and Napoleon often encouraged

► *The Prussian Retreat, by Knötel. The mortally wounded Duke of Brunswick is borne from the field as the Prussian Army retreats in growing disorder from their double defeat at Jena–Auerstädt. Many thousands were destined to become prisoners of war over the following month, so remorseless was the French pursuit. (P. J. Haythornthwaite Collection)*





the marshals to rub and feud. Like Caesar Agricola, he believed in '*Divide et impera*'. He also favoured Lazare Carnot's principle of '... making war pay for war'. Before leaving Weimar (where he passed the 15th and 16th) he decreed that a little under 160 million *francs d'or* were to be exacted from the possessions of the hapless King of Prussia.\*

### An All-Out Exploitation

One positive outcome of the affair was that Napoleon had a battle-fresh corps with which to head the pursuit – and Bernadotte for understandable reasons was determined to regain favour. On the 16th Prince Murat rounded up (he later claimed) some 14,000 prisoners – and Blücher narrowly evaded capture by Klein's and Lasalle's light cavalry. Napoleon's plan was now to envelop and destroy the fleeing Prussian Army. Murat, Soult and Ney (part of whose troops were relatively fresh) were to apply direct pressure to the Prussian rearguards, while the remaining four *corps d'armée* carried out an envelopment by way of Halle and Dessau to sever the Prussian line of retreat. Of the four corps designated for this duty (I, II, V and VII), only Bernadotte's was intact and relatively rested. Although most of the remaining Prussians evaded the first trap, the Duke of Württemberg's 12,000-strong reserve was caught by Dupont's 1st Division of I Corps at Halle on the 17th after a 27-kilometre forced-march, and lost 5,000 men and eleven of his 38 guns. Even Napoleon was impressed: 'Bernadotte hesitates at nothing,' he observed. 'One day our Gascon will get caught!'

The Prussian Army was in total disarray. King Frederick-William left his army on the 20th, instructing Prince Hohenlohe to re-form the army at Magdeburg and do everything necessary to hold the line of the Elbe. But Hohenlohe considered

his orders unrealistic. Lacking a nucleus for the task as Württemberg's Reserve was already shattered, on the 21st he decided to continue north with 40,000 men towards Stettin-on-Oder, hopeful that General Bennigsen's Russian troops might meet him there. Blücher, meanwhile, retired by a separate route farther west through the city of Brunswick, taking many of the surviving guns with him.

On the 18th Napoleon switched his lines of communication from now distant Würzburg to Mainz on the Rhine, 257 kilometres from the front. The same day as he rode over the battlefield of Rossbach (where Frederick the Great had massively defeated Marshal Soubise in 1757), he ordered the destruction of the Prussian monument commemorating the victory.

The immediate problem facing the *Grande Armée* was now the mighty Elbe. In fact it was rapidly passed. Davout was the first to cross over this obstacle, on 21 October at Wittenberg, where the local population thwarted a Prussian rear party's attempt to blow the bridge. The same day Lannes repaired a burned bridge 10 kilometres to the west of I Corps, while Bernadotte scoured the river bank for boats near Bardy. Thus by the 22nd Napoleon had two bridgeheads over the Elbe, while the cavalry, IV and VI Corps were closing in on the fortress of Magdeburg. Although nothing could now save Berlin and Potsdam, some anxiety was being caused by indisciplined looting by the troops, and severe penalties were announced: not on moral grounds, alas, but in case these 'sweets of war' should hinder the efficiency of the pursuit.

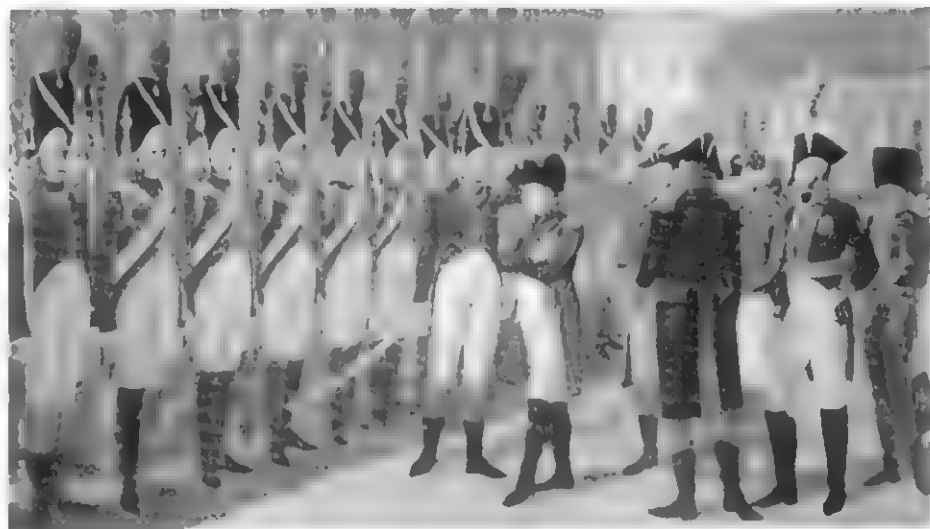
Leaving Ney to besiege the fortress and city of Magdeburg, the main army pressed ahead remorselessly for the Prussian capital. Napoleon reached Potsdam from Kropstädt after a 54-kilometre journey on the late afternoon of Friday the 24th. After holding a full-scale review of the Imperial Guard the next day, on the 25th he visited the tomb of Frederick the Great in the Garrison Church, where he stood in silent meditation for ten minutes. His respect for Frederick did not prevent his ordering the immediate confiscation of the Prussian monarch's sword, general's sash, Ribbon of the Black Eagle, and the standard of the Prussian Guards carried during the Seven Years

\* An alternative view of Bernadotte's conduct is being investigated. Many criticisms of his actions stem from charges made after 1813 (by which time, as Crown Prince of Sweden, he was fighting Napoleon). It is just possible (but no more) that Bernadotte in fact crossed the Saale at Kamburg, mistaking it for Dornburg during darkness. Furthermore, I Corps may not have heard the din at Hassenhausen, as the topography of the Saale would serve to swell the sound of cannon-fire from Jena and (thanks to the Kosen massif) largely obstruct that from III Corps' sector. So Bernadotte may have been 'marching on the sound of cannon' to his south, in any case he covered some 30 miles of ground with his corps to reach Apolda – exhausted – at 4.30 p.m. I am indebted to Dan Rakadovich for recently making these points.

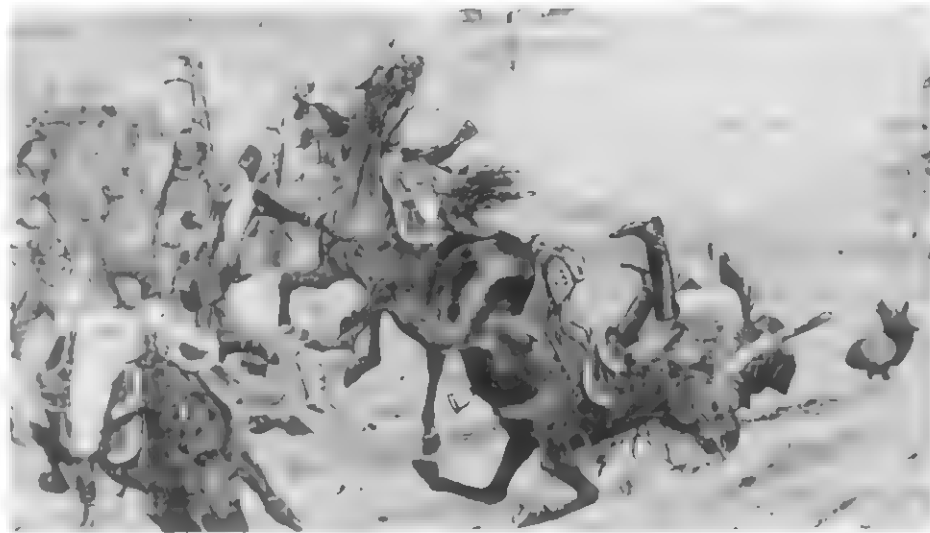
► **The Column of Rosback (sic).** As he accompanied his army in pursuit of the Prussians, Napoleon's route took him over the battlefield of Rossbach, where, in 1757, the army of Frederick the Great had massively defeated the French army of Marshal Soubise. In 1806 Napoleon ordered the memorial to be torn down. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)



► **Napoleon inspecting the Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard.** On 25 October, Napoleon passed in review the Imperial Guard at Potsdam, near Berlin. The same day he visited the tomb of Frederick the Great, and thereafter confiscated his sword, hat and orders – which were sent to les Invalides in Paris as supposedly legitimate spoils of war. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)



► **The 16ème Régiment de Dragons at Prenzlau, by Knötel.** Retreating from Jena, Prince Hohenlohe reached Prenzlau on 28 October with 12,000 men, hotly pursued by Murat and part of the Cavalry Reserve. After a brief engagement outside the town, the French broke into its streets, and Hohenlohe was bluffed into surrendering by some 4,000 French troops. (P. J. Haythornthwaite Collection)



War ‘... for the consolation of those of our *invalides* who escaped the catastrophe of Rossbach’. ‘Rossbach has been avenged,’ Napoleon declared later.

Napoleon had made up for his dismissive remark on the evening of the 14th by pouring praise upon Louis-Nicolas Davout, hero of Auerstädt, in the *5ème Bulletin de la Grande Armée* issued on the 15th. ‘On our right,’ he proclaimed, ‘Marshal Davout’s Corps performed wonders. Not only did he contain, but drove back and defeated, for over three leagues, the bulk of the enemy’s troops, which were to have debouched through Kosen. This marshal displayed distinguished bravery and firmness of character, the first qualities in a warrior.’ A week later through Berthier he instructed Prince Murat, leading the final advance on the Prussian capital, as follows: ‘The Emperor, desirous of giving proof of his satisfaction with III Corps commanded by Marshal Davout, intends and wishes that his corps should enter the first into Berlin.’

The formal entry into Berlin took place on the afternoon of 27 October. Before leaving Potsdam for the ceremonial parade, the Prince of Hatzfeld proffered the keys of the city to the conqueror. Immediately after the ceremony Napoleon ordered his arrest as a spy, and only the abject pleas of the Prince’s wife at his feet induced the Emperor to

relent in a theatrical scene intended to show his sublime magnanimity. Then the drums beat, the military bands struck up, and preceded by Marshal Davout’s *corps d’armée* Napoleon took formal possession of the city, the Emperor taking up his quarters in the Royal Palace.

A day or two later Marshal Augereau and VII Corps arrived, escorting the prisoners of war taken on the 14th. Included in their number were many members of the Prussian Chevalier Guard, noblemen all. They pleaded not to be marched through the city, but Augereau, who had been in Berlin and a witness of the scene when the young bloods had ostentatiously sharpened their swords on the steps of the shuttered French embassy, not only refused their request but had them marched past the very building – a small revenge that was not lost on the Berlin townsfolk, who had little love for the roistering bullies of yesterday.

### An Army Eliminated

Napoleon spent several days holding splendid army reviews to impress the capital, but in the meantime the pursuit of the Prussian Army continued unabated. III and VII Corps marched from Berlin to the east, there to join IX Corps (mainly comprising Bavarian troops), summoned from Dresden under Prince Jérôme Bonaparte, in

► **The Capture of Magdeburg, 8 November 1806. The capitulation of General von Kleist and his garrison to Marshal Ney effectively ended the campaign of 1806.** (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)



# The Pursuit



order to form a covering force on the River Oder at Kustrin and Frankfurt-on-Oder and beyond, watching for any signs of the Russian Army. In close pursuit of Hohenlohe – now moving through Oranienburg towards Prenzlau, with Blücher re-joining the main line of retreat from the 24th to serve as rearguard – came the hard-marching men of Bernadotte's corps, with the four cavalry formations of Murat's Cavalry Reserve (namely the divisions of Lasalle, Milhaud, Beaumont and Grouchy) heading for Templin through Zehdenick to cut the Prussians off from the Oder. On the 26th, Grouchy and Lasalle smashed Hohenlohe's flank guard at Zehdenick, and two days later Hohenlohe threw in his hand and surrendered with 14,000 men at Prenzlau. The 29th found Lasalle and a handful of cavalry before the walls of Stettin, where he bluffed the garrison of 5,000 men into capitulation before Lannes and V Corps appeared on the scene on the 31st. The lower Oder was thus effectively blocked, garrisoned and guarded by the conquerors.

Blücher had broken away with some 22,000 men on the 28th, and headed north-west through Grivitz and Schwerin, making for Lübeck near the Baltic coast and the Danish frontier. Hot on his heels came Murat, Bernadotte and Soult (with some 35,000 troops), with Louis, King of Holland, and Marshal Mortier marching on Hamburg from the Rhine. Hoping to join a Swedish division of

reinforcements, and possibly to escape by sea, Blücher forced his way into the neutral free city of Lübeck on 5 November demanding money and resupply. He received neither, for next day Soult and Bernadotte stormed the city, and their men proceeded to put the hapless city to the sack, terrible atrocities being committed. More than 3,000 died, while Chief-of-Staff von Scharnhorst and 10,000 men were forced to surrender. In the confusion Blücher managed to leave the city with part of his force, only to be rounded up on the 6th, rationless, at Ratkau. The final text of the surrender agreement ended with the following postscript: 'I capitulate, since I have neither bread nor ammunition – Blücher.' In spring 1807 Blücher would be exchanged for General Claude Victor-Perrin, captured near Stettin early that year. From these events dated Blücher's personal vendetta against Napoleon, due to reach its satisfaction at Waterloo eight and a half years later.

Thus 8,000 more Prussian survivors went into the bag, as did (at Schlutup) 600 men of the Swedish division of King Gustavus IV, Prussia's and Russia's Nordic ally in the Fourth Coalition, even though it had re-embarked most of its personnel. It fell to Bernadotte to interview Count Moerner and his Swedish officers. As Marbot recalled, 'The Marshal, whose manners, when he liked, were, I must admit, very attractive, was especially desirous to earn the character of a well-



◀ *Battle in the town of Lübeck. The Free-Port of Lübeck was the sanctuary for which General Blücher headed with his part of the defeated Prussian Army, perhaps 17,000 men. He took possession of the town in all but name on 5 November. Bernadotte, Murat and Soult were close behind him, and on the 6th a fierce engagement began in the outskirts. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)*



bred man in the eyes of these strangers.' The Gascon wine and dined his guests, solicitous to their every wish, and unbeknowningly set in train processes that would earn his election as Crown Prince of Sweden in 1810, and a double-crown as King Carl XIV of Sweden and Norway just eight years later. On the northern flank, thereafter, in Murat's words 'The combat ends for lack of foes.' But surprisingly this did not bring peace.

These events left only the 22,000-strong garrison and 500 guns of distant Magdeburg to account for. Ney, typically believing he faced only 9,000 men, pressed the siege with gusto. On 10 November, the same day as Mortier occupied Hanover, von Kleist, the dispirited garrison commander, surrendered Magdeburg. The myth of Prussian invincibility lay shattered. Napoleon was now in military terms ruler of central Europe.

### An Incomplete Achievement

Napoleon had blown with his breath, and Prussian military might was no more. In the space of just 33 days, the *Grande Armée* had won two decisive battles, killed 20,000 Prussians, taken 140,000 prisoners of war, 800 pieces of artillery and 250 colours and standards. This was indeed *blitzkrieg* warfare with a vengeance. Two successive years had seen two of the strongest monarchies of Europe brought low.

► **The Battle of Lübeck.** Another representation of the events of 6 November. The French assault was pressed to the uttermost. Some 3,000 Prussians were killed or wounded, and another 5,000 made prisoners. Blücher evacuated his remaining men to nearby Ratkau, where a little later he surrendered. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library)

But the achievement in 1806, massive though it was by any calculation, was incomplete. 'War', as the Prussian military genius, Carl von Clausewitz, would write in the early 1820s, 'is the continuation of policy by other means.' Yet the King of Prussia – thanks to the indomitable resolution of his proud and beautiful queen and his chief minister, Hardenburg, refused to make peace. It would in fact take two more campaigns – including a truly terrible winter one – and two more major battles (Eylau and Friedland) to persuade Prussia, and Alexander I, Tsar of all the Russias, to come to the conference table. The power of the sword had not, for once, led to peace.

If this was one political setback for Napoleon, two more would follow soon after. He remained in Berlin until 25 November, and during this period two important events took place, one of them of the greatest significance for the future. First, a delegation from the French Senate waited upon his pleasure on 18 November. Instead of fulsome congratulations – after all, news of Austerlitz had brought Paris out *en fête* just under a year before – they presented a strong and eloquent plea for a general peace. Napoleon was as astounded as he was affronted. This event indicated that Napoleon's hold on the French people was beginning in certain respects to weaken and wear thin. Perhaps there was a growing awareness that the two-year-old *French Empire* was beginning to turn



into an *Imperium Napoleonicum* as it continually expanded. Napoleon himself was both Emperor and King of Italy. Brother Joseph was King of Naples. Brother Louis was King of Holland. Where would Napoleon's seemingly insatiable ambitions end? Men were beginning to realize that their Emperor's achievements had to be largely paid for in French blood and treasure. There was a finite limit to both.

Secondly, there was – as always – the question of England's inveterate hostility. Threats of invasion, promises of Hanover's restoration and many other blandishments had failed to impress 'the Nation of Shopkeepers'. Very well, Napoleon decided, we will cut down to size the 'perfidious British' by an all-out onslaught on the basis of their prosperity: their trade. This was by no means a new concept – trade embargoes had been announced and implemented before – but never had so much of Europe been under Napoleon's control as now, in late 1806. The result were the fateful Berlin Decrees, pronounced on Friday 21 November, instituting the Continental System and Blockade, designed to close all European ports to British trade indefinitely, and thereby ruin British wealth at its source as Napoleon saw it. Superficially, this appeared a masterly stroke of policy; in effect it was to prove inefficient to operate, impossible to impose and a disastrous error of Grand Strategy. For not only would British counter-measures prove more effective, but the illusion of being able to make the System work would ultimately lead Napoleon into two disastrous adventures: the wars with Portugal (1807) and then Spain (1808-14), and then the invasion of Russia (1812). Thus the immediate aftermath of the splendid military achievements of October to November 1806 was to sow the seeds of Napoleon's ultimate downfall. *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

From the purely military viewpoint, however, Napoleon's achievement in 1806 must rank among his greatest. His pre-emptive advance into Saxony through the Thüringerwald barrier; his effective command of his flexible *bataillon carré*; his remorseless use of the seized initiative to force decisive battle (in fact – this unforeseen – a pair of major engagements) on an un-anticipated date

and at two unplanned locations upon an unwilling foe (although Hohenlohe's steadfast bravery on 14 October at Jena and the tough fighting qualities of most of his command both deserve commendation: the quality of the Prussian Army of 1806 was considerably greater at regimental and divisional level than it has often been represented) – these were the components of Napoleonic *blitzkrieg* with a vengeance, and rarely were they to be more impressively displayed. 'Move dispersed; fight concentrated.' Then followed one of the most celebrated pursuit and exploitation operations in history. The progressive collapse of Prussian morale served to heighten the French achievement beyond rational limits. Once again, the tired but jubilant French soldiers could boast – as in 1805 – that 'The Emperor has discovered a new way of making war: he employs our legs rather than our arms.'

The soldier of the late 20th century can usefully reflect upon what the 1806 Campaign in Prussia can teach him after an interval of getting on for 190 years. The values of manoeuvre warfare in achieving the dislocation of the enemy's plans and forces, in achieving psychological dominance at the price of accepting a high risk scenario – these features of 1806 were also to be found in the Gulf 'Hundred Hours' War' of 1991. Napoleon would have approved the Coalition's direct and dramatic offensive – potentially and actually so much more effective than a war policy based on attritional warfare, with its concepts of wearing down the enemy's men and material by slow but deadly erosion little by little, and of seizing and holding 'key terrain' as the inescapable preliminary to launching further attacks to destroy the enemy. Surprised and wrong-footed Napoleon may have been several times in October 1806, but his innate boldness and ability to achieve – and also to absorb – surprise was in fact based to a large measure on defence in depth as provided by the all-purpose 'battalion square' at army corps level. He had proved once and for all his mastery of waging ruthless warfare based upon the flexible use of the alternative plan. In many ways, war would never be quite the same again: a new age had clearly dawned – one that would last well into the late 20th century.

# THE BATTLEFIELDS TODAY

Both Jena and Auerstädt are excellent battlefields to visit: relatively little has changed, and the key villages are still small and the best viewing points quite easy to find. The visitor is advised to travel by car as considerable distances are involved in this classic example of a Napoleonic 'double-battle'. Furthermore, if one's interest includes the pre-battle moves, it is practically possible to trace Napoleon's every move from 8 October now that Germany has been reunited. But be warned; road numbers in Europe can change, so the purchase of up-to-date maps – 1/250,000 (for the campaign) and 1/50,000 (for the battles) is vital.

In the city of Jena, famous today for its Zeiss optical factory, follow road-signs for Weimar and Erfurt past the Friedrich Schiller University (with its statue to a former student, Karl Marx) and drive along the Goethe Allee and Erfurter Strasse (in 1806 forming part of the 'Schnecke' or 'Snail' Pass used by Augereau's VII Corps on the French left) for about four kilometres before taking the hill road on the right to Cospeda. Once there, visit the excellent Battlefield Museum with its electronic map, many relics of 14 October 1806, and small shop (allow at least 30 minutes for this visit). A new plaque outside claims Napoleon spent the night of 14 October at the inn that is now the museum.

Thus orientated, return towards Jena down the Erfurter Strasse for three kilometres, before taking a very sharp left turn into Am Steiger road. Drive up this road gradually narrowing into a track for rather more than a kilometre, always heading uphill through trees and bushes, until further progress becomes impossible. This is the 'artillery road' of the night of 13/14 October 1806. You are now on the Landgrafenberg and able to see the Windknollen ridge and its group of buildings some 400 metres ahead. The area was a Soviet Army Driving School until late 1991 (the Russians

having reputedly removed the much deteriorated *Napoleonstein* which used to stand halfway over the open rising ground leading to the plateau's summit. From the Windknollen's northern edge a good panoramic view is obtained (Stand One). To the left on higher ground is Cospeda. Half left on the plain is Lützenroda, and away to the right the wooded hills concealing most of Closewitz. Two kilometres beyond Lützenroda is the vital village of Vierzehnheiligen with Krippendorf one kilometre to its east. This overall view covers most of the battle zone fought over between 6 a.m. and 1 p.m. on 14 October 1806, and repays careful study.

Returning downhill to Goethe Strasse and the Friedrich Schiller University, turn left into Saalbahnstrasse and follow road signs for Naumburg through Lößstedt. In the suburb of Zwätzen turn left for Closewitz and Rödigen, taking care to bear away to the right for the latter at the half-way point. This is the general route followed by Soult's IV Corps on the French extreme right. A good view of the area which saw some of the finest fighting by the Prussians against Saint-Hilaire's Division is obtained from the crossroads half a kilometre south-west from the village of Rödigen (Stand Two). Retracing your steps half a kilometre southwards, turn right for Closewitz and thence drive on to just short of Lützenroda (Stand Three). Stop and look south, thus gaining the Prussian view of the Windknollen feature once the mist lifted. This road was the main Prussian line staunchly held by Tauentzien during the early morning battle. Suchet's division of V Corps attacked Closewitz (to your left), and Gazan's division eventually broke through to the west of Lützenroda (to your right) at about 9.30 a.m. The

**Stands:** The viewing positions referred to in this section are indicated on the bird's eye views on pages 54-5 and 74-5

battle then moved farther north towards Vierzeñnheiligen (to the half-left behind you). Just west of Lützeroda is a useful modern marker stone indicating Lannes's strength and main axis of advance.

Drive on towards Vierzeñnheiligen, and stop halfway along the straight approach road (Stand Four). This is the general line of advance taken rashly by Ney and part of VI Corps in contravention of Napoleon's orders, his unsupported troops passing just left of the village. In due course he was rescued in the nick of time from Grawert's and Hohenlohe's counter-attacks by Gazan's division and Imperial Guard cavalry moved up to his right. In Vierzeñnheiligen is an interesting Prussian war memorial near the church, and a marker stone records Ney's line of advance and strength at the time. Beyond the village (Stand Five) is the scene of the critical fighting in this sector. Drive on again towards Gross Romstedt, stopping just short of the village (Stand Six). This was the scene of the beginning of the rout of the Prussian Army as Lannes, the rallied Ney and Murat's fresh light cavalry, backed by the Imperial Guard and the cuirassiers, brought their full weight to bear. The Prussian line of retreat was north-westwards in the general directions of Weimar and Apolda. The last stand (Seven) is just short of Kötschau, gained by car from Gross Romstedt. Here General Rùchel's force tried to intercept and rally Hohenlohe's fleeing troops. Driving on to the nearby bridge over today's tiny Herressener Bach, we have reached the extreme limit of the day's fighting at Jena.

It is now time to turn our attention to the sister-battle of Auerstädt. From the centre of Jena take Road 88 towards Naumburg. After nine kilometres the road crosses the River Saale at Dornburg. Park on the farther side of the bridge and inspect the neighbouring topography. This was the spot where Bernadotte claimed that the road was too difficult for his First Corps to negotiate so as to be in time to take part in Jena. The west bank is indeed steep, but the Marshal specifically mentioned the approaches to the bridge. Then proceed along Road 88 all the way to Naumburg. Take the left fork in the city centre and follow signs for Road 87 to Bad Kosen. Both

I and III Corps were bivouacking in this vicinity on the night of 13/14 October 1806. Davout set out with his III Corps alone for the Pass of Kosen. Stop at the top of the hill and look back – and the problem of marching 27,000 men and 40 guns at night through a dense mist up the winding hill (slightly south of the present line, but the original track merges with the modern road near the top) becomes evident.

Continue west along Road 87 through Bad Kosen ignoring two roads off to the right. At the third you are close to the place where Davout's advance guard first encountered Prussian cavalry amidst the fog. Drive into Hassenhausen, turn right towards Spielberg, and park about 150 yards on the left where there is a grass-covered mound (Stand One). This vantage point – which was used by Davout – gives an excellent view over the northern two-thirds of the battlefield. Behind you is the line of approach of Gudin's division at 7 a.m. on 14 October 1806. Facing west you see the villages of Pöppel (nearest to the main road), and Benndorf, Zäckwar and (just concealed to your right) Spielberg – the respective positions of Schmettau's infantry and of Blücher's cavalry (initially). Friant's division arrived to prolong Gudin's battered right by 9.30 a.m. Both divisions swept over the road (around where you stand) at 11.30 a.m., Friant leading, eventually to capture Pöppel, and rout the Prussian forces of Schmettau and Wartensleben.

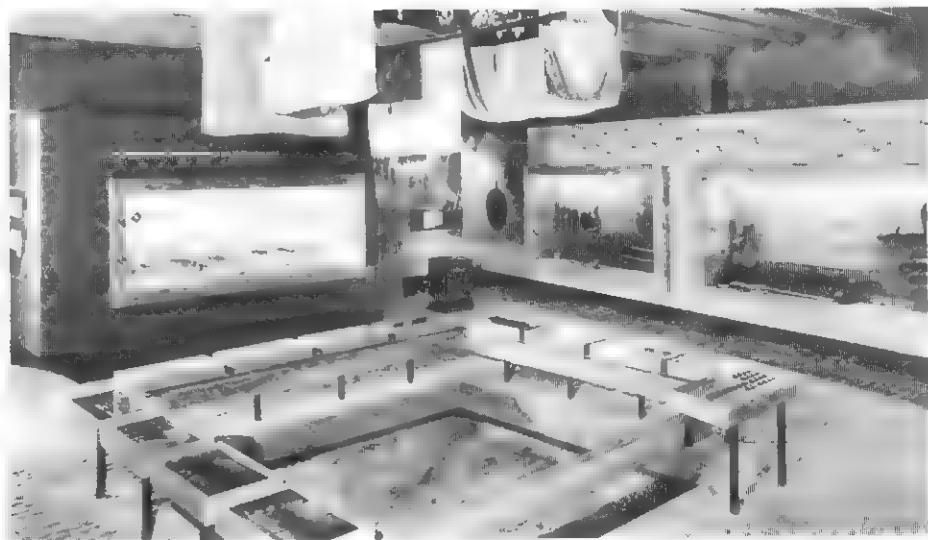
Returning to the main road, cross straight over and stop after 300 metres facing a windmill (Stand Two). From here there is a fine view of the southernmost third of the battlefield. Near the end of the houses on your right was the scene of the French 12th Regiment's fine stand. Behind you (looking east) was the line of Morand's approach at about 11 a.m., and its successive changes of formation to meet the various challenges posed by Blücher's redeployed cavalry and half Orange's ill-fated infantry division (which came into action from beyond the windmill). By 12.30 p.m. the Prussians were in full retreat as the French swept forward to occupy the east bank of the Lissbach.

Returning to Road 87, cross today's small stream and take the road in Pöppel to Benndorf and through Zäckwar. Half-way to Spielberg stop.

► View from the Eckartsberg Heights looking south-west towards the town of Auerstädt (left middle-distance). (Author's photograph)



► Interior of the '1806 Museum' at Cospeda, photograph by Schörlitz. The sunken electronic map with reproduction Prussian and French colours overhead.



at bend in the road (Stand Three). Facing east, you are looking towards Hassenhausen (to your right) and the scene of Blücher's first cavalry attacks and the eventual line of advance by Gudin (right) and Friant (left). Regaining Road 87, turn right and after crossing the culvert over what is left of the Lissbach, turn left on to a track leading to the large memorial to Brunswick set amidst a group of trees (Stand Four). You are now in the original Prussian centre, and facing east you can trace the line of Morand's advance towards you. Back on Road 87 again, drive west through Gernstädt (1½ kilometres) and take local road to the left signposted for Auerstädt. Pause (Stand Five) where the road emerges from hills at two tracks running away to your right from the hills overlooking the town:

these crests of the Eckartsberg Heights on both sides of the road were the farthest points reached by Davout's jubilant but understandably exhausted troops at about 4.30 p.m. on the 14th.

Driving down into Auerstädt, park in the centre square and examine the large memorial topped by a Prussian eagle; this monument links Prussian valour but defeat in 1806 with Prussian vengeance and victory in 1870. You have now completed a fairly comprehensive battlefield tour. A return to Jena through Apolda covers the route of the Prussian Army and its massed convoys.

The best available maps for the battlefield aspects of this suggested tour are Series M745 (1/50,000 scale) sheets L4932, L4934, L5132, L5134 (Jena), L516 and L534 (for Auerstädt).



# CHRONOLOGY

**Events leading up to the Battles of Jena-Auerstädt:**

**7 August 1806** Prussia secretly decides on war against France.

**5 September** French precautionary mobilization begins.

**18 September** Napoleon learns of Prussian occupation of Saxony.

**19 September** Napoleon issues orders for Campaign of Prussia.

**27 September** Napoleon leaves Paris for Germany.

**2 October** Napoleon reaches Würzburg; Prussian ultimatum reaches Paris.

**8 October** The French enter Thüringerwald passes as ultimatum expires. Action at Saalburg.

**9 October** French reach Saalfeld, Schleiz and Hof; French thus in control of pass exits for minimum fighting. Louis Ferdinand advances.

**10 October** Engagement at Saalfeld: Lannes defeats Prince Louis Ferdinand, who is killed. Prince Hohenlohe retires on Kahla and Jena; Brunswick masses main Prussian army around Weimar.

**11 October** French continue towards Auma and Gera en route for Leipzig, out of contact with the main Prussian forces.

**12 October** Lannes reports enemy in strength west of the River Saale; French army wheels towards the river. 'The veil is torn'; Napoleon predicts battle near Erfurt for the 16th.

**13 October** As French converge on Jena and Naumburg, Napoleon joins Lannes at Jena. Brunswick orders move north towards Halle, leaving Hohenlohe and Rüchel to serve as rear-guards.

**14 October DOUBLE-BATTLE OF JENA-AUERSTADT.**

**Timing of events on 14 October – at Jena:**

**6.30 a.m.** Lannes advances on Closewitz through fog. Breaks through.

**7.30 a.m.** Lannes, aided by guns, penetrates to Vierzeñnheiligen.

**8.15 a.m.** Soult clears Closewitz, but is halted outside Rödigen.

**9.15 a.m.** Augereau passes Cospeda, and attacks towards Isserstedt.

**9.30 a.m.** Holtzendorff attacks Soult, but is defeated by 10.15 a.m.

**9.30 a.m.** Grawert retakes Vierzeñnheiligen as Ney reaches the plateau.

**10.00 a.m.** Hohenlohe realizes a major battle is developing and attacks.

**10.00 a.m.** Rüchel's force sets off from Weimar to reinforce Hohenlohe.

**10.15 a.m.** Ney retakes Vierzeñnheiligen but in error advances past V Corps' left.

**10.30 a.m.** Ney faces destruction, but Napoleon sends in Guard cavalry.

**10.50 a.m.** Lannes re-contacts Ney's right: VI Corps crisis recedes.

**11.30 a.m.** Augereau captures Isserstedt, and links with Ney's left.

**Midday** Prussians everywhere halted at Jena; Napoleon orders attack (12.30 p.m.).

**1.00 p.m.** Prussian cohesion wavers, but Saxons regain Isserstedt.

**2.00 p.m.** Saxons withdraw, and Prussian retreat becomes a rout.

**2.45 p.m.** Rüchel attacks towards Gross Romstedt.

**3.30 p.m.** Soult and Lannes rout Rüchel. Murat heads cavalry pursuit to Weimar (reached at 6.00 p.m.).

### Timing of simultaneous events on 14 October – at Auerstädt:

**3.00 a.m.** Davout receives Napoleon's order and informs Bernadotte.

**4.30 a.m.** III Corps sets out for Kosen defile (I Corps marches south).

**6.45 a.m.** Davout's advance guard meets enemy patrol near Hassenhausen.

**7.15 a.m.** Gudin's division prepares Hassenhausen for defence.

**8.00 a.m.** Schmettau's and Blücher's first attacks are repulsed.

**8.30 a.m.** Wartensleben's division enters the fray; Gudin's troops waver.

**8.45 a.m.** Friant arrives; placed on his right, he takes Spielberg.

**9.00 a.m.** III Corps cavalry and guns arrive from Kosen defile.

**10.00 a.m.** Major Prussian attack narrowly repulsed, and village reinforced.

**10.15 a.m.** Duke of Brunswick mortally wounded: Prussian command hiatus before King takes over.

**11.00 a.m.** Orange reaches the field as Morand arrives on Gudin's left. (Bernadotte's I Corps reaches approaches to Dornburg.)

**Midday** Orange's attack repulsed, Davout orders general advance.

**12.30 p.m.** Prussian Army in full-scale retreat: French pursuit begins.

**2.30 p.m.** I Corps at last mostly over River Saale at Dornburg.

**4.30 p.m.** Exhausted French pursuit halts on heights above Auerstädt.

**6.00 p.m.** Leading elements of V Corps meet I Corps near Apolda.

### Events following the Battle of Jena–Auerstädt:

**15 October** Napoleon launches all-out pursuit, Bernadotte's I Corps leading, as defeated Prussians head for the River Elbe.

**16 October** Murat occupies Erfurt, capturing 14,000 prisoners of war.

**17 October** Action of Halle: Bernadotte defeats Württemberg.

**20 October** French reach the River Elbe on a wide front: Hohenlohe heads for Stettin.

**22 October** French cross the Elbe at two places; Ney besieges Magdeburg.

**25 October** Davout's III Corps occupies Berlin; Napoleon then orders III Corps and Augereau's VII Corps east towards the River Oder as precaution against Russian intervention. Jérôme occupies Dresden. Remainder head north.

**28 October** Hohenlohe and 14,000 surrender to Murat at Prenzlau.

**29 October** Lasalle takes 5,000 prisoners at Stettin without fighting.

**5/6 November** Blücher surrenders with 12,000 at Lübeck to Bernadotte, who also captures part of a re-embarking Swedish division.

**10 November** Magdeburg surrenders to Ney (who takes 22,000 prisoners). Mortier and X Corps occupy Hamburg. End of the Campaign of 1806; onset of Campaigns of Eylau (fought 7/8 February 1807) and of Friedland (fought 14 June 1807) against remaining Prussians and Russians.

**25 June–12 July** Conference of Tilsit – separate peaces with Russia and Prussia. Frederick-William III's realm dismembered and disarmed.

**25 July** Napoleon reaches St. Cloud and Paris.

# A GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

On the *place of events* of 1806 within the Napoleonic Wars: Chandler D. G., *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, New York and London, 1967.

On the campaign and battle of Jena-Auerstädt, most useful for the *Prussian* view: Lettow-Vorbeck, D. von, *Der Krieg von 1806 und 1807*; Vol. 1; *Jena and Auerstädt*, Berlin 1899, still the standard work. Also Höpfner, E. von, *Der Krieg von 1806 und 1807*, Vol 1, Berlin, 1850; Steiger, G., *Die Schlacht bei Jena und Auerstedt 1806*, Cospeda, 1981. For the *Saxon* view of events see Montbé, *Die Chur-sächsischen Truppen im Feldzuge 1806*, Dresden, 1860.

On the campaign and battle of Jena-Auerstädt, useful for the *French* view: Colin J., *Les Grandes Batailles d'Histoire – Jena*, Paris, 1915; Houssaye, H., *Jena et la Campagne de 1806*, Paris, 1912; Bonal, H., *La Manoeuvre de Jena*, Paris, 1904 – still very useful, if ageing. Reichel, D., *Davout et l'Art de la Guerre*, Neuchâtel, 1975, a most impressive modern work including documentation on Auerstädt. Petre, L., *Napoleon's Campaign of Prussia – 1806*, London, 1907, republished 1972 and 1990: still the most useful, if dated, account in English. Maude, Colonel F. N., *1806: The Jena Campaign*, London, 1909, is also highly recommended. The most recent French monograph is Tranie J. and Carmigniani J-C., *Napoléon et l'Allemagne – la*

*Prusse 1806*, Editions Lavauzelle, Paris, 1992; lavish.

On the *Prusso-Saxon Army*, its organization, equipment, tactics, etc.; see articles by Hof-schröer, P., in *Miniature Wargames* Nos. 8, 10 and 18; also Osprey's *Men-at-Arms Series*, including Nos. 152, 149, 162, and 192; thorough and highly reliable.

On the *French Army*, etc., as above: Elting, J., *Swords around the Throne*, New York & London, 1988; excellent. Haythornthwaite, P. J., *Napoleon's Military Machine*, London, 1988; also very good. Also numerous Osprey's *Men-at-Arms Series*, including Nos. 55, 64, 122, 146, and 153; Chandler D. G. (ed.), *Napoleon's Marshals*. New York & London, 1987; and *Great Campaigns Series*, No. 2 – *Austerlitz, Battle of the Three Emperors*, 1990.

*Atlas*: Esposito, V. J. & Elting, J. R., *A Military History and Atlas of the Napoleonic Wars*, New York & London, 1964, reprinted 1980; the best to date.

*General Reference on the Period*: Chandler D. G., *Dictionary of the Napoleonic Wars*, New York & London, 1969. Haythornthwaite, P. J., *The Napoleonic Source Book*, London, 1990. Both very useful and up to date.

*Guide Book*; Riley, J. P., *The Jena Battlefield Guide*, privately published in limited edition; Soest, 1991.

# WARGAMING JENA-AUERSTADT

One of the beauties of wargaming is that, unlike so many other games or sports, there is no governing body, no universally accepted game structure or set of rules: readers who wish to recreate Jena-Auerstädt as a wargame after reading this book are, therefore, free to choose and design games appropriate to their individual interests and resources. Some may prefer to use the original campaign merely as a setting within which players can take decisions that alter history so that, for example, Bernadotte's I Corps might appear on the battlefield of Auerstädt; others will insist upon an accurate recreation of the historical events in a series of games. A large group of wargamers can pool their miniature armies to present the visual spectacle of Jena on a specially constructed modern terrain; a few players may choose to concentrate upon the experiences of only one division, or a band of humble infantrymen on the skirmish line.

These notes, therefore, can only offer some suggestions for wargaming aspects of the historical campaign, which readers are free to adopt, adapt or reject as they see fit! They can also refer to my wargaming suggestions in *Austerlitz 1805* in the Osprey 'Campaign Series' for additional ideas. While I shall describe games that portray Councils of War and Imperial Headquarters, I shall concentrate upon alternative methods of wargaming the climax of the campaign – the battles of Jena-Auerstädt themselves.

Wargamers, most of whom have had no experience of military discipline or subordination, appear to enjoy nothing better than a vociferous argument over some obscure aspect of military history or ambiguous paragraph in the rules. Little ingenuity will be required, then, should the game organizer wish to recreate the lengthy and indecisive discussions at Potsdam. Each player will take the role of one individual – Frederick-William III,

Prince Hohenlohe, the Duke of Brunswick, General Phull, Colonel Scharnhorst or Colonel Massenbach – and receive a personal briefing describing his character, opinions, attitudes towards the other participants in the Council of War, and a secret objective, which might be to secure the adoption of his own plan by the King, or simply to ensure that his rival's suggestions are rejected. All players should be provided with basic information about the composition of the Prussian Army and its tactical doctrine.

The discussion can be limited to a specified duration, at the end of which the game organizer will determine to what extent each player has fulfilled his personal objectives, or until a plan of campaign has been agreed. If a plan has been adopted, it can be implemented in a subsequent game depicting the manoeuvres before Jena-Auerstädt, or simply compared with the original to assess its merits.

The ambitious wargamer who fancies himself a latter-day Napoleon can best be put to the test by playing 'The Generalship Game' from Paddy Griffith's *Napoleonic Wargaming For Fun*, in which he will have to organize his daily routine, allocate time for dictating orders, inspecting troops, reading dispatches, writing home to Josephine, and remember to eat and sleep if he is not to collapse under the strain, by placing counters around a track representing the twenty-four hours of the day. Written orders for each corps – perhaps dictated to an assistant umpire taking the role of Berthier – are the only messages that have to be presented to the umpires, so that they can move the corps counters accordingly (or not, in the case of Bernadotte) on the master map. Other documents that in real life would have had to be written, to set up supply depots and maintain lines of communication, for example, are simply assumed to have been completed if time has been allocated

for that purpose on the player's twenty-four hour track. The strategic manoeuvres of army corps and any engagements that occur are resolved by the umpires on a stylized chart of the campaign area, similar to the map of the London Underground, on which the 'lines' are main roads and the 'stops' towns and cities a day's march apart from each other, counters representing army corps and simple, boardgame-style combat results tables. Although the Emperor can alter his schedule for the remainder of the day when he receives fresh information, the time such intelligence will have taken to reach him will frequently mean it will be too late to send reinforcements to a distant battlefield or to ride there himself. The Prussians may be commanded by another player, or umpire-controlled in accordance with the historical plan or any alternative strategy devised in the Council of War game.

A similar system, but involving several players taking the roles of the various corps commanders, could be employed to game the manoeuvres of *La Grande Armée* before Jena-Auerstädt in accordance with Napoleon's historical plan of campaign, or orders issued by a player portraying the Emperor. The characters of the various Marshals would be reflected by giving players individual rest requirements per day and ruling that those with little interest in staff-work, such as Ney, would spend less time servicing lines of communication and organizing supplies than that specified in the rules (unknown to them!) with consequent deleterious effect upon the progress and combat-effectiveness of their troops; while conscientious administrators like Davout would maintain their forces by allocating extra time to such tasks. Personal objectives could introduce the internal rivalries and animosities of the Marshalate: Bernadotte, for example, might be told that his personal victory conditions require him never to cooperate with Davout. Apart from such individual objectives, the players' success in the game would be measured by the esteem, or otherwise, in which they were held by the Emperor.

To paraphrase one of the maxims, not of Napoleon but of his porcine namesake, in *Animal Farm*: 'All battle games are unrealistic, but some are more unrealistic than others!' Recreating an

historical battle involving several corps poses many questions which the game organizer must consider carefully.

Ever since the publication of H. G. Wells's *Little Wars* the vast majority of recreational war-games that employ model or toy soldiers upon a miniature terrain have permitted the players to move the troops and administer the rules themselves – though matchstick-firing toy cannon have long been supplanted by dice and casualty tables to preserve the carefully painted uniforms of the tiny combatants. Most commercial wargame rules for the Napoleonic Wars have been written by starting with rates of march and fire laid down in contemporary military manuals and then applying them to the movement and musketry of large bodies of troops, resulting in complex systems totally unsuitable for refighting battles involving much more than a division on each side. Attempts to recreate large historical battles by altering the man-to-figure ratio so that relatively small numbers of 25mm or 15mm models purport to represent whole armies are neither visually nor psychologically convincing: the engagement simply does not look like a great battle, and the players invariably forget that on this occasion twenty figures represent a division and treat them as if they were a battalion. Players who enjoy this type of game should concentrate, instead, upon just one formation's experience of the battle, such as that of General Morand's division at Auerstädt. If sufficient players and model troops can be mobilized for the game, it would be possible for each participant to command a division and administer the rules, but I suspect the wargame would be extremely slow and tedious for all but the most fanatical devotee, since most divisional-level games take more hours to play than the time represented by the sum of their turns.

The appearance of smaller-scale figures – 1/300 or 6mm troops cast as groups or individual soldiers, and minuscule 2mm company or battalion blocks – has allowed wargamers to represent large armies convincingly without risking bankruptcy, and encouraged the development of the army-level game, in which the minutiae of battalion or regimental tactics are ignored and simple, board-game style calculations – sometimes called 'One



Brain Cell Rules' – determine the outcome of combat between large bodies of formed troops. In recent years 'Ancient' wargaming has been revolutionized by the publication of the Wargames Research Group's *De Bellis Antiquitatis* (DBA) rules, designed by Phil Barker, which offer an army-level game that can be played to a decisive conclusion in one to two hours, using only a small number of 1/300 troops on terrain that will fit easily on a dining table. In these rules the players' ability to control their forces is severely limited: a die is thrown each turn to indicate the number of separate units that can be activated, encouraging commanders to combine troops into large formations that can be manoeuvred as one body, rather than to detach individual regiments on different missions, as is so often seen in conventional 25mm divisional-level games. Phil has been developing Napoleonic versions of the DBA system, entitled *Boots and Brandy*, which should offer a playable set of rules for recreating battles such as Jena–Auerstädt in stylized form.

Another innovative 'Ancient' wargame, designed to recreate a Roman commander's perception of battle against Gaulish warbands, but which could, with a little ingenuity, be adapted for Napoleonic engagements, is Andy Grainger's *Aquila*. In this game the Gauls are umpire-controlled and the player, commanding an army of several legions and auxiliaries, must decide whether to remain in the rear of his battle-line to observe when any unit starts to waver and watch the development of the battle; or to ride to a particular unit to discover how many casualties it has suffered and its morale, but losing awareness of the state of units other than those immediately adjacent to that he has chosen to visit; or to throw himself into the fighting to rally hard-pressed troops by personal example, risking death and losing all knowledge of what is happening elsewhere on the battlefield until such time as he is able to extricate himself from the mêlée. While the player is thus engaged, an umpire keeps a secret record of the casualties and morale of all legions outside the commander's vision or perception, only updating the display of 1/300 troop blocks, according to an agreed symbolic code, when the player returns from the fray. This simple, umpired

solo game neatly introduces the 'Fog of War' without resorting to complex rules preventing players from reacting to what they can see on the tabletop. Similar games could be devised to represent the perceptions of Napoleon at Jena, Davout at Auerstädt, or those of each corps or division commander.

Yet another system for recreating historical battles, using figures and umpires to administer the rules, is to make players take the roles of regimental or brigade commanders and choose what orders they will issue and their personal actions from a 'menu', which is then handed to a team of umpires who move the models on a representation of the battlefield laid out on the floor of a large hall and resolve exchanges of musketry and bayonet charges according to extremely simple rules. The players sit well back from the figures, which they are not allowed to touch, observing the terrain through opera glasses or toy telescopes. When this system was first tried in a megagame of the battle of Novi (1799), the rules were soon discovered to be too complex to maintain an acceptable rate of play, and it was afterwards agreed that the umpires' task would have been far easier if one side had been pre-programmed, rather than actively played by another group of wargamers submitting orders from the 'menus'.

Instead of deploying model troops on a miniature battlefield, the game organizer may prefer to use counters and maps in the manner of the original military training game, developed and published by von Reisswitz in 1824 and adopted by the Prussian Army on the recommendation of von Muffling: 'This is not a game! This is training for war!' Whereas in most recreational wargames the players move the troops and resolve musketry and artillery fire, in Kriegsspiel the umpires alone have access to the rules and the master map on which the manoeuvres of both forces are plotted, leaving the players free to concentrate upon the real command skills – analysing reports, observing the enemy and trying to deduce his intentions, and issuing clear, decisive orders. Any order or message that could be sent in real life can be sent in Kriegsspiel, simply by writing it down and handing it to an umpire. Personal reconnaissances may be

made by asking to view the mastermap, but the umpires will cover all areas of the battlefield visible from the commander's vantage point with large sheets of paper before the player enters the room, so that only those friendly or hostile troops visible from that position will be on view. Thus the players will experience genuine problems – limited, often out-of-date reports and a restricted view of the field – rather than those of having to move large numbers of delicate models and looking up complex rules which occupy so much time in conventional figure games. The umpires receive and implement the players' orders, return reports from cavalry patrols and subordinate officers, update the master map and resolve combat: they are the only ones to see an objective display of the opposing forces' movements and intentions.

In Kriegsspiel it is possible to play through a considerable period of notional time because there are no rigid turns representing specified numbers of minutes. The game proceeds until the umpires decide that one of the players should receive a report, or observe something significant; since the rules express movement in paces per minute, it is easy to determine how far the troops will have advanced until a decision point is reached. The time taken by players to observe the situation and respond by issuing fresh orders will be noted and the positions of the troops on the master map adjusted accordingly. Long periods of skirmishing or artillery bombardments, however, can be resolved in only one calculation, so that play can proceed to the next decision point.

Von Reisswitz's rules for Detachments Kriegsspiel, though extraordinarily sophisticated for their time, employing devices such as proportional dice and combat odds, are too detailed and time-consuming in execution for recreating engagements between armies, but the fundamental prin-

ciples of umpire-control, limited awareness and real-time decision-making can be incorporated with army-level or 'One Brain Cell' style rules to produce a stimulating and realistic game.

The best method of recreating Jena–Auerstädt might be to combine the principles of Kriegsspiel with the subjective player display of *Aquila*. If sufficient players are participating to portray individual corps or division commanders, they could be linked to a team of umpires around an objective display or master map by means of the inexpensive battery-powered intercoms available from high-street electrical stores. Each player would have his own, subjective model or display of his own troops and immediate area of the battlefield. As the action developed, his personal umpire would feed him a 'stream of consciousness' narrative, describing what he could see and hear, over the intercom, in response to which the player would be free to update his personal display as he saw fit. Players taking the roles of army commanders would visit their subordinates in accordance with movement rates laid down by the umpires, and attempt to 'read' the battle by assimilating and interpreting the situations they observed from each vantage point and by consulting their corps or division commanders. All communications other than face-to-face meetings would be by way of written messages sent via the umpires. Although such a game would involve more preparation than traditional wargames with figures, the enhanced atmosphere and tension would amply repay the extra effort. The hindsight which players refighting an historical battle enjoy would be offset by the increased confusion of the individual subjective displays, portraying the commanders' perceptions rather than the reality. Using this system, perhaps Napoleon may be justified in remarking, 'Your Marshal must have been seeing double!' when he receives incredible reports!

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